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ABSTRACT

Three methods of conducting television pilot testing research--the evaluation of television programs for their potential in attracting target and general audiences--are compared and contrasted in the three sections of this report. The introductory section provides an overview of the research, outlines the goals and objectives of the pilot programs, and briefly describes the three pilot testing methods: the Percy System, which relies on a panel of 200 television households equipped with special viewer response devices; the Program Evaluation Analysis Computer (PEAC) System, which uses a more portable version of the Percy viewer-response device; and traditional focus group discussions, which bring together a specially selected group of people to view, discuss, and evaluate a pilot television program. The main section of the report contains the three program-viewer analyses developed by the three methodologies. The final section presents convergent and divergent findings across the three research methods, focusing particularly along six evaluation criteria: (1) providing articulate and relatively unbiased viewer feedback, (2) facilitating the development of norm-building pilot testing criteria, (3) flexibility in the assessment of special programing objectives, (4) producing meaningful diagnostic feedback to producers, (5) yielding suggestions for broad programing directions, and (6) providing timely and cost-effective sampling and data analysis. (RL)

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A Comparison of Three Research Methodologies for Pilot Testing New Television Programs

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PREFACE

Pilot testing is, in essence, an acknowledgment of the primary entitlement of the television viewing audience. In pilot testing research, program concepts and early production materials are evaluated by our most critical constituency, the viewing public, in an implicit statement that audience attraction and appreciation constitute the *sine qua non* behind each of our daily policymaking, management and broadcasting endeavors.

If this vital truth of audience entitlement is somewhat obfuscated in the rush of political, managerial and technical developments, it exerts its power directly and forcefully in pilot testing research. Viewers clearly convey their reasoned programming preferences and the critical viewing standards they will bring to the pilot being tested. The skillful formative researcher elicits and reports such viewer data in terms readily converted by the producer into ameliorative production changes. In this manner, and with each pilot tested, the audience, once again, has reminded us of their privileged entitlement as the powerful patron and recipient of all our programming activities.

If we believe in the power of our audience and our mandate to serve them, and we do, then the Office of Communication Research must advance every form of research which contributes meaningful audience information to the complexities of our program decisions. The pilot testing process is one of our most traditional and potentially effective opportunities to do so. Accordingly, the pilot testing explorations reported in this document are offered in the hope that they further our ability to understand and empower the needs and interest of our entitled and articulate constituent, the viewer.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Significance of the Research

In July 1980, CPB's Office of Communication Research was asked to test two pilot television programs under review by the Corporation's Program Fund for possible CPB funding. The two pilots were both situation dramas targeted to special audiences: *Winslow House*, a program for and about older persons, and *Up and Coming*, a program intended primarily for black teens. OCR was asked to advise the Program Fund in its independent funding decisions about the two pilots, by providing audience reactions useful in predicting each program's ability to achieve its stated objectives.

Parallel OCR research interests in the studies which resulted encompassed a search for new, methodologically flexible and diagnostically productive pilot testing procedures. The majority of past OCR pilot tests had used traditional focus group discussions to evaluate new program material. More recent innovations had included experiments with the Percy System (VOXBOX) in Seattle, but OCR also wished to assess the pilot testing utility of the PEAC (Program Evaluation Analysis Computer) System, a formative research tool developed jointly by the Children's Television Workshop (CTW) and the Ontario Educational Communications Association (OECA). Accordingly, the requirement to test *Up and Coming* and *Winslow House* presented a simultaneous opportunity for cross-methodological comparisons of these three pilot testing capabilities.

Finally, the research was significant in a third respect. The targeted nature of both pilot programs represented an opportunity for an important research education function—that of insisting on the tailored evaluation (whether formative or summative) of programs with special goals and intended audiences. The targeted and purposive nature of the two pilot programs represented a research opportunity for highlighting the criticality of special research design and interpretation considerations in the evaluation of such programs.

B. Goals and Objectives of the Pilot Programs Tested

1. *Winslow House* Created by Christopher Sarson, Sarson Television Productions, Inc., Englewood, N. J., this program was principally aimed at an older viewing audience, although it was also intended to present certain messages about aging in contemporary U.S. society to a younger audience. The producer sought to portray desirable, varied and nonstereotypical images of older persons, to raise significant issues about the meaning and conditions of aging in this country, and to offer these images and issues as an alternative to less satisfactory commercial television treatments. The development of this pilot had been funded by CPB, and the Corporation was trying to determine whether additional monies should be spent in developing a full season of *Winslow House*.

2. *Up and Coming* This pilot was produced by Avon Kirkland, KQED, San Francisco, and was targeted to black teenagers and their families. Here again, as with *Winslow House*, although the program had a special target audience, it was also intended to present certain messages to a broader viewing audience. It sought to present attractive images of black family life, emphasizing a cohesive family unit with a strong father figure, and offering realistic alternatives to the stereotypical black images popular on commercial television. The episode tested was one of 13 which had been supported by the ESAA project

within the former Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. CPB was trying to determine whether it should fund the second year of the series.

For both programs, central research questions focused on the credibility and desirability of characters and situations portrayed, the extent to which these portrayals offered an improvement over conventional commercial television fare; the clarity with which certain program's messages conveyed meaningful daily coping advice; and the ability of the programs to convey such messages without offending the target or general audience. The three research systems used to test the two programs offered different technical and empirical perspectives from which to assess the success of the programs in meeting such objectives.

C. Three Pilot Testing Methods and Criteria for Comparing Their Utility

The three pilot testing capabilities which OCR wished to compare differed along several criteria important to pilot testing and other formative research purposes. Among the most critical features distinguishing the three methods were sampling and test site flexibility, and degree of standardization of pilot evaluation criteria. Specifically, OCR sought to compare the three systems along six criteria essential to a productive pilot testing program:

1) Which system offers the viewer sample the highest degree of articulateness without sacrificing amount of viewer feedback to serious response bias?
2) Which has the potential to facilitate the development and future application of standardized pilot testing evaluation criteria, to build meaningful norms for various program types in terms of important production and policy considerations?
3) Which, in addition to facilitating the development and application of standardized program norms, is still flexible enough to address the research to the special programming objectives of individual pilot programs?
4) Which has the greatest ability to provide meaningful diagnostic feedback to the pilot program's producers, that is, to present audience reactions with clear and direct implications for program production, promotion and scheduling decisions?
5) Which has the potential of addressing not just the particular pilot being tested, but also the program concept, content area or target group, so that audience reactions to a specific pilot might also be used to identify and evaluate broader programming directions beyond the one program tested?
6) Which method proves most cost-effective in conventional research terms of sampling flexibility, turn-around time and costing?

The three methods evaluated along these criteria were: traditional focus group discussions, the Percy System, and the PEAC System. Each method can be used for a variety of research purposes other than pilot testing, but when applied to the evaluation of new program pilots their approaches are philosophically similar in a general sense. Each method generally rests on the sampling of a limited number of potential program viewers in order to predict the relative appeal and effectiveness of the program, should it be broadcast nationally. The entitlement of program audiences to speak their own viewing preferences and standards is thus a philosophical thread binding the three approaches. Beyond that point, however, the three methods diverge along important research design features: the nature of the viewer feedback channel, the extent to which the viewer's evaluation vocabulary is standardized/restricted, the research setting, the private vs. public manner in

which viewer evaluations are recorded, and the formats in which resulting data are interpreted and reported. Below is a brief description of the three systems and how they were used to evaluate *Winslow House* and *Up and Coming*.

1. *Percy System Tests* The Percy System is a television audience research system which relies on a panel of 200 television households in Seattle, Washington. The panel households are equipped with a special viewer response device (an elaborate remote control device) which has nine special buttons labelled with evaluative comments the viewer can make about the program he or she is watching. The button labels are: "excellent," "informative," "credible," "funny," "boring," "dumb," "unbelievable," and "zap." The ninth button, labelled "personality," allows the viewer to apply the preceding comments not just to the program *in toto*, but to the particular character/host/speaker on camera at a given time. The demographic composition of the current Percy panel reflects that of the surrounding Seattle neighborhoods. However, only 5 percent of the panel are members of a minority group.

Procedures for using the Percy System to test the two pilots began with KCTS' agreement to specially air these pilots for the purpose of a Percy panel evaluation. Panelists were alerted by mail as to when the programs would be aired (*Winslow House* on July 21 at 9:30 p.m., and *Up and Coming* on July 26 at 10:30 p.m.). In this initial mail contact and in a follow-up postcard, panelists were recruited to view these programs and use their VOXBOX devices to register their evaluations of the programs while they were viewing them. (The on-going operation of the panel when recruitment is not used relies on these same instructions, with panelists pushing whichever button best represents their reactions to a program, whenever the program elicits a reaction.)

Data reporting of Percy panel responses is "time-locked" to program content; that is, viewer responses are analyzed in relation to the specific action, dialogue and/or characters which the program presented at the time the panelists responded in a particular fashion. These data are graphically presented over a timeline which represents the duration of each pilot, and which indicates key program elements associated with a sudden change in frequency or direction of audience response. A narrative text is used to explain and interpret such a chart. The system, in close cooperation with KCTS, frequently supplements its panel data with questionnaire responses collected from non-panel viewers of pilots broadcast by the station. Just before and after *Winslow House* and *Up and Coming* were aired, a special KCTS announcement asked viewers to phone in their opinions at the end of the program.

The panel evaluations can be viewed live during the broadcast of either or both pilots. One advantage of examining the data in this manner is the ability to simultaneously view the pilot on one monitor and numerical representations of panel reaction on a second monitor. An immediate summary of audience response is available overnight; a more comprehensive write-up within two weeks.

2. *PEAC (Program Evaluation Analysis Computer) System* PEAC is a hand-held viewer response device similar to the Percy VOXBOX in that viewers use labelled buttons to evaluate programs on a second-by-second basis while they are viewing them. It differs from VOXBOX in that the devices are portable with readily-changed labels, and they are generally used in group viewing situations (rather than in individual viewers' homes). Each viewer's responses are stored in his or her evaluation device until the session is over and

researchers aggregate the entire group's data in a central computer for subsequent analysis. One of the advantages of the PEAC system is its portability; thus, we were able to set up viewer tests in Dayton which has no version of the Percy System, but which has accessible viewers in the black and 55+ target groups we wished to study (in addition to general audience viewers). Also, the readily changed button labels allowed viewer monitoring of specific dimensions most salient to the producer's concerns, in this case, stereotyping.

Winslow House and *Up and Coming* were tested in Dayton, with representatives of PEAC Developments using the PEAC equipment in the context of a focus group discussion of the programs. Viewers, carefully selected to represent both 55+ and total audience viewers for *Winslow House* and black and white teenagers and adults for *Up and Coming*, were recruited to view and discuss their reactions to the program at a central location under the supervision of a group leader who guided their conversation into salient areas and encouraged honesty and diversity of expression. Use of the PEAC system to ask "closed" questions (i.e., questions with agree/disagree, or multiple choice, or numerical scale responses) was combined with open group discussion of the program and the group's own responses to the closed questions. Accordingly, specific areas of group reactions to a pilot (e.g., liking/disliking a given character or turn of events) can be identified, as viewers privately register their reactions on the PEAC device. Follow-up questions can then be used to explore the reasons behind agreements or disagreements in group members' responses to each program.

Data reporting includes both a quantitative summary of each viewing group's responses to the closed questions, and a narrative integrating these findings with the open-ended group discussions built around them. An immediate summary of audience response is available overnight; a more comprehensive write-up within two weeks.

3. *Traditional Focus Group Discussions* Traditionally, focus group discussions bring together a group of indviduals (often selected to meet certain demographic or media use requirements) to view and evaluate a television pilot. Procedures are identical to those described above, except that no viewer response device (e.g., PEAC) is usually used to capture information. Rather, the group discussion is recorded and transcribed for analysis in a final report which tries to identify elements of the program (e.g., setting, characters, script, storyline) associated with favorable and unfavorable audience response.

During the week of July 14-18, focus group tests of the two pilots were conducted in two cities: Seattle and Washington, D.C. Seattle was deliberately selected for comparison with Percy System findings and to augment the data from Percy panelists with those of minority and majority viewers throughout the Seattle area. Washington, D.C. was chosen for sampling advantages in reaching the black teen and adult population, and for a geographic spread across the three cities (Seattle, Dayton and Washington, D.C.) to be analyzed using the various methods.

In addition to the group discussion and tape recording as methods of eliciting and reporting viewer response to the programs, Prism Corporation, the contractor chosen to run these groups, administered a brief questionnaire to viewers during the course of their discussion. Final data reporting included tabulation of these responses for each group, as well as an integrated interpretation of group discussion and questionnaire findings for each program. "Turnaround time" for the final report was three weeks.

The next section of the report presents the results of OCR pilot testing of *Winslow House* and *Up and Coming* using each of the systems just described.

II. RESEARCH FINDINGS

A. Percy System (VOXBOX)*

1. *Winslow House* Overall, *Winslow House* had an average Percy panel rating of 13 and a share of 24. In other words, 13 percent of the total Percy sample, or 24 percent of the sample which actually had the television on, watched *Winslow House*. The rating and share were relatively consistent during the entire show with few households turning away from the program.

One hundred and forty Percy response buttons were pushed during the program. As Table 1 shows, 72 percent of the button pushes were positive. During the last two minutes of a program, the Percy panel had been asked to push the button which corresponded to their overall opinion of the program. The final evaluation of *Winslow House* was more negative than were the responses which took place during the show: 53 percent, or 21 of the final button pushes were negative. During the program, the "excellent" button was pushed most often (32 times), followed by "credible" (28 times). Eight percent of the buttons pushed were personality buttons.

The Percy system also provides information on viewer response to specific program segments. Figure 1 shows that the largest number of positive responses occurred after Jake and Millie went to dinner. Aside from the final evaluation, negative response was greatest when Mrs. Duffy asked Jim to deliver the food.

Phone Survey Sixty phone interviews with *Winslow House* viewers were conducted. This total represents only a fraction of the number of viewers who called to evaluate the program. Because of the limited number of interviewers and time constraints, 60 interviews were completed. Over half (52 percent) of the *Winslow House* viewers were 50 years of age or older. This is a larger percentage of older viewers than watch the average KCTS evening program. In May 1980, Nielsen information shows that 44 percent of adults viewing during prime time were age 50 or older. The evaluations of viewers over 50 were examined separately from the evaluations of viewers under 50.

The demographic characteristics of phone survey respondents are contained in Table 2. More than two-thirds of those over 50 were women, compared with 55 percent of the respondents under 50. In comparison, 53 percent of the audience for a typical KCTS evening program are women. *Winslow House* respondents were well-educated: 78 percent of those over 50 and 66 percent of those under 50 had at least some college education. More than half of the respondents over 50 lived in two-person families, compared to 36 percent of those under 50. Those under 50 were more likely to be in homes with three or more persons. All but two of the respondents were white.

When asked to rate the program on various aspects, those under 50 gave somewhat more positive evaluations than did those over 50. Overall, on a scale of one to ten, with one being the lowest rating and 10 being the highest, respondents under 50 rated the program 7.3 and those over 50 rated it 6.7.

When asked to rate the program's overall objectives on a scale of one to five[1], Table 4 shows that those under 50 rated all but one of the dimensions slightly higher than did

---

* Excerpts from a report prepared by Ellen Burch and Patricia Harris, with assistance from Michael Stanton.

[1] One means "strongly disagree" and five means "strongly agree."

Table 1
Winslow House:
Percy Panel Responses

	+ EXCEL	+ INFORM	+ CREDBLE	+ FUNNY	− BORING	− UNBELIEV	− DUMB	− ZAP	PERSON POS	PERSON NEG
ENTIRE PROGRAM (N=140) 100%	22.9%	9.3%	20.0%	14.3%	5.7%	5.0%	10.7%	4.3%	5.7%	2.1%
FIRST 28 MINUTES (N=100) 100%	24.0%	13.0%	20.0%	17.0%	3.0%	3.0%	7.0%	2.0%	8.0%	3.0%
LAST 2 MINUTES (N=40) 100%	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%	7.5%	12.5%	10.0%	20.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%

\+ = positive evaluation button
− = negative evaluation button

those over 50. "The program made me think" was rated 3.6 by those over 50 and 3.4 by those under 50. The highest rated objective among both groups was, "The program held my attention." The lowest rated objective among those over 50 was, "The characters remind me of people I know." This objective also tied for last place among those under 50, along with "the program made me think."

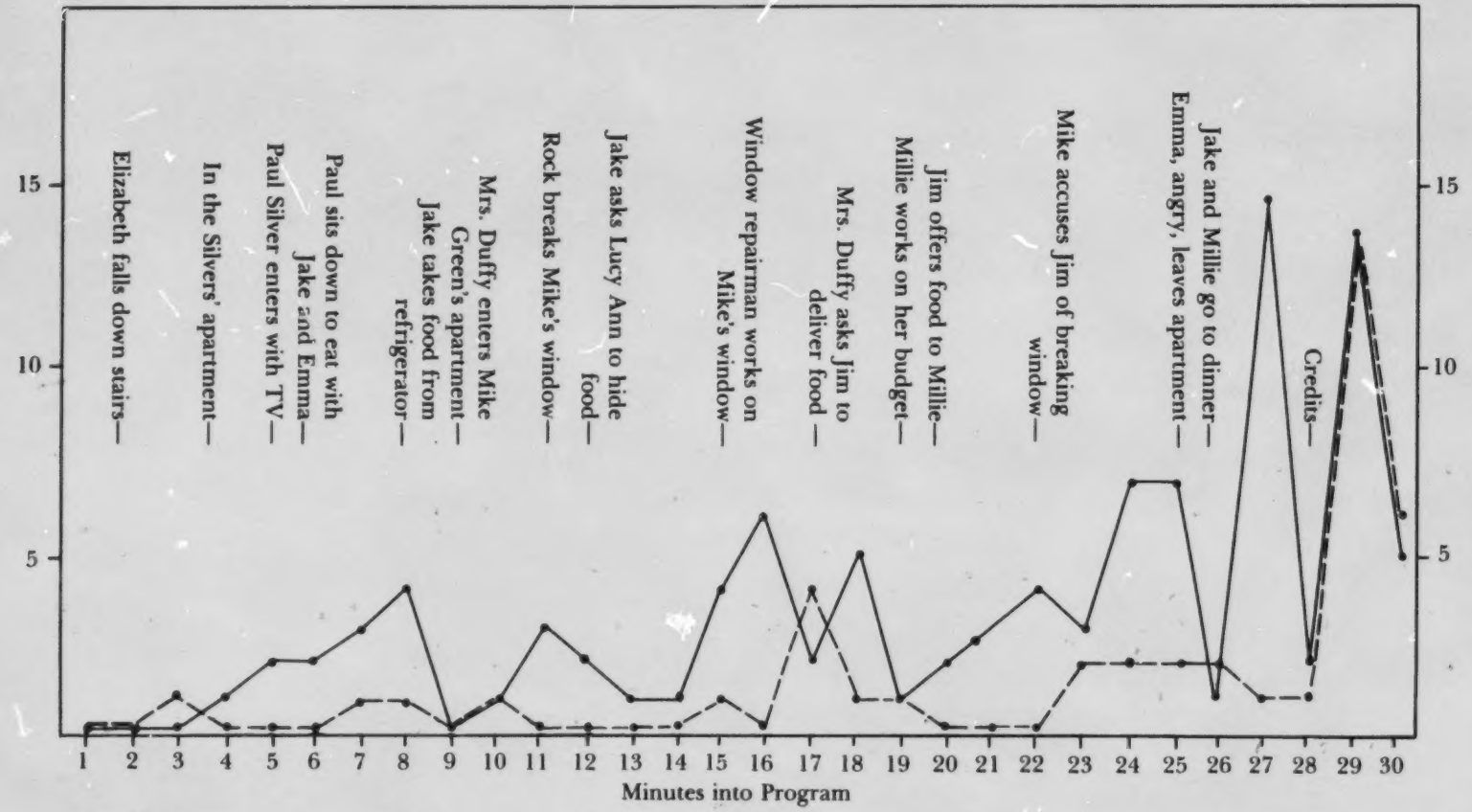
When respondents were asked which character they liked the most (Table 5), both groups put Emma Silver at the top of the list. Among the older respondents Jake was way behind in second place. The younger respondents had Millie Coolidge in second place and Jake in third.

Both groups liked Mike Green the least (Table 6) although the younger respondents were more adamant in their disfavor: 26.5 percent of those over 50 disliked Mike the least compared to 40 percent of those under 50. However, almost one-fourth of each group said they "disliked no characters."

Figure 1

Percy System Responses to *Winslow House*

Number of Positive and Negative Responses by One-Minute Intervals


15
10
5
Elizabeth falls down stairs—
In the Silvers' apartment—
Paul Silver enters with TV—
Paul sits down to eat with Jake and Emma—
Jake takes food from refrigerator—
Mrs. Duffy enters Mike Green's apartment—
Rock breaks Mike's window—
Jake asks Lucy Ann to hide food—
Window repairman works on Mike's window—
Mrs. Duffy asks Jim to deliver food —
Jim offers food to Millie—
Millie works on her budget—
Mike accuses Jim of breaking window—
Jake and Millie go to dinner—
Emma, angry, leaves apartment—
Credits—
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
Minutes into Program

Positive Responses (Sum of all EXCELLENT, INFORMATIVE, CREDIBLE and FUNNY responses)

Negative Responses (Sum of all BORING, UNBELIEVABLE, DUMB and ZAP responses)

Table 2
Winslow House:
Phone Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

	OVER 50 (N=31)	UNDER 50 (N=29)
Age		
Under 20	—	7.4%
20 to 34	—	63.0
35 to 49	—	29.6
50 to 64	87.1%	—
Over 64	12.9	—
Minority Group Identification		
White	100.0%	93.2%
Black	—	3.4
Asian	—	3.4
Sex		
Male	32.3%	44.8%
Female	67.7	55.2
Education		
Less than High School Graduate	—	6.9%
High School Graduate	23.3%	27.6
Some College	26.7	31.0
College Graduate	33.3	24.1
Graduate School	16.7	10.4
Size of Household		
One Person	16.7%	10.7%
Two Persons	56.7	35.7
Three or Four Persons	23.3	39.3
Five or More Persons	3.3	14.3

Table 3
Winslow House:
Phone Respondents' Overall Evaluation

	OVER 50 (N=31)	UNDER 50 (N=29)
Very Positive	19.4%	13.8%
Positive	51.6	65.5
Neutral	9.7	13.8
Negative	—	6.9
Very Negative	19.3	—
	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4
Winslow House: Phone Survey
Evaluation of Program's Objectives

	OVER 50 (N=31)	UNDER 50 (N=29)
The program held my attention	4.1[a]	4.4
The program was well acted	4.0	4.1
Winslow House was a good change of pace from most shows	3.9	4.4
The program depicts older people in a positive manner	3.7	4.1
The program made me think	3.6	3.4
The characters remind me of people I know	3.2	3.4

[a] Ratings on a 5-point scale with 1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree."

Table 5
Winslow House: Phone Respondents' Most Liked Characters

	OVER 50 (N=31)	UNDER 50 (N=29)
Emma Silver	28.8%[a]	25.0%
Jack Silver	13.5	19.6
Millie Coolige	10.2	23.2
Jim Weber	10.2	14.3
Mary Duffy	5.1	7.2
Mike Green	5.1	1.8
Elizabeth O'Brien	5.1	—
Paul Silver	5.1	—
Lucy Ann Johnson	1.7	3.6
Window Repairman	—	1.8
Liked all characters	10.2	—
Liked no characters	5.1	3.6
	100.0%	100.0%

[a] Some respondents mentioned no characters, some mentioned several. These figures are computed from the total mentions by each subsample.

Table 6
Winslow House:
Phone Respondents' Least Liked Characters

	OVER 50 (N=31)	UNDER 50 (N=29)
Mike Green	26.5%[a]	40.0%
Jake Silver	10.5	11.4
Emma Silver	10.5	8.6
Jim Weber	7.9	8.6
Window Repairman	7.9	5.7
Mary Duffy	5.3	2.9
Millie Coolige	2.6	—
Paul Silver	2.6	—
Dislike no characters	23.7	22.9
Dislike all characters	7.9	—
	100.0%	100.0%

[a] Some respondents mentioned no characters, some mentioned several. These figures are computed from the total mentions made by each subsample.

Response to the open-ended questions provides additional information about *Winslow House*. (See Tables 7-12 following text.) The open-ended questions were: (1) What was your reaction to *Winslow House*? (2) What did you *like* about *Winslow House*? (3) What did you *dislike* about *Winslow House*?

Initial reaction to the program by the older respondents was generally favorable. Several indicated that they "enjoyed the focus on older people." Younger respondents were also quite positive in their initial reactions.

When asked what they *liked* about the program, several of the older respondents focused on the story, Molly Picon, the Jewish aspect, and the characters. They also mentioned that the program showed a different aspect of older life and dealt with our attitudes toward older people.

At the same time, when asked what they *disliked* about the show, older respondents expressed concern that the characters were stereotyped and outdated. It was also suggested by one viewer that "Jewish humor is out of place in Seattle."

Respondents under 50 indicated that they liked the characters and the fact that the program was about older people. On the other hand, they expressed concern that the characters were stereotyped and that the characters were "overdramatic" and hard to believe.

Table 7
Winslow House:
Reactions to Program by Phone Respondents Over 50

Comments	*Number*
Enjoyed the focus on older people	6
Liked it	4
Loved it	3
Excellent, should be more shows	3
Great cast, don't usually like sitcoms	1
Favorable	1
Very favorable - good human story	1
Light and entertaining	1
General delight	1
Too short	1
Delightful	1
Cute, nice	1
Good	1
Pointless	2
Mediocre	1
Not too pleased	1
Negative	1
Boring	1
Lousy	1
Stupid	1
Settings exaggerated	1
Not impressed - Jewish humor out of place in Seattle	1

Table 8
Winslow House:
What Phone Respondents Over 50
Liked About the Program

Comments	*Number*
The story	5
Molly Picon	4
The Jewish aspect	4
The characters	4
The acting	3
Millie	2
The dialogue	2
Identify with the characters	2
Family show	2
Humor	2
Variety	2
Cast	1
Unusual	1
Showed different aspect of older life	1
No violence	1
Warmth of people	1
The ending	1
Down to earth	1
Entertaining	1
Good for middle-aged people	1
Dealt with prejudices, young people	1
Dealt with our attitude toward older people	1
Real people with wit and honesty	1
Mixture of young and old	1
The format	1
Refreshing for public television	1
Nothing	2

Table 9
Winslow House:
What Phone Respondents Over 50
Disliked About the Program

Comments	*Number*
Stereotyping	2
Just like commercial shows	2
Mr. Silver didn't come through	2
The ending	2
The acting	1
Not interesting	1
Too much like my relatives - Don't need to see it	1
Fractured - Too much action	1
Jake - Too sad, overacted	1
The Jewish Mama - outdated	1
Swearing	1
Cliché characters	1
Molly overacts	1
Jim Weber is too bubbly	1
Pointless	1
Not very innovative	1
Jewish humor is out of place in Seattle	1
Boarding house setting is exaggerated	1
Nothing	14
Too Short	2

Table 10
Winslow House:
Reaction to Program by Phone Respondents Under 50

Comments	*Number*
Enjoyed it	5
Liked it	5
Characters good	3
Very good	2
Fairly good	2
Great	1
Positive	1
Favorable	1
Warm	1
Well done	1
Acting good	1
Good basically	1
Good potential	1
Older focus	1
Funny	1
Cute	1
Like having show for the aged	1
Terrible	1
Soap opera	1
Not favorable	1
Too much arguing	1
Heavy-handed	1
Lacked humor	1
Little boring	1
Didn't understand	1

Table 11
Winslow House:
What Phone Respondents Under 50
Liked About the Program

Comments	*Number*
Characters	8
About elderly people	6
Different	4
Acting	4
Realistic	2
American drama	2
Variety of age groups	2
The way characters were developed	2
Characters all under one roof and care for one another	1
Entertaining	1
Emotional	1
Interaction real	1
Good change	1
Molly Picon	1
Suspenseful	1
General idea good	1
Family show	1
Well-rounded show	1
People being nice to each other	1
Liked that kind of sitcom	1
Interesting	1
Story line	1
Old fashioned show	1
Liked idea of community living situation	1
Emma Silver was funny	1
Funny	1
Refreshing	1
Like a play	1
Represented ethnic groups without stereotyping	1

Table 12
Winslow House:
What Phone Respondents Under 50
Disliked About the Program

Comments	*Number*
Lack of humor	2
The ending	2
Heavy-handed	1
Slow moving in spots	1
Some acting	1
Script	1
Like a soap opera	1
Stereotyping - The Silvers were one-dimensional	1
Too cute	1
The music	1
Too "hard"	1
Bordering on schmaltz	1
The argumentation	1
Made young people look silly	1
Man acted like he was absent-minded	1
The bigot in the snow	1
Some characters over-dramatic	1
Characters weren't believable	1
Acting stilted at times	1
Characters were made to say it, instead of act it	1
The acting	1
Nothing	8
Too short	1

2. *Up and Coming* Throughout the program, *Up and Coming* maintained a rating of 12 and a share of 29. In other words, 12 percent of the total Percy sample, or 29 percent of the sample which actually had the television on, watched the program.

In all, 220 evaluation buttons were pushed during the show. As Table 13 shows, 64 percent of the button responses were positive. During the last two minutes of the program, 92 percent or 46 of the buttons were positive.

During the program, the "credible" button was pushed the most often (39 times) followed by "excellent" (38 times). "Boring" was third (24 pushes). Twenty-six percent of the buttons pushed were personality labels.

The Percy data reveal some very interesting information about *Up and Coming*. As Figure 2 shows, response at the beginning of the program was definitely more negative than positive. This was particularly true about the scene where Kevin and High Rise are in the coach's office. The response to this scene can be viewed as negative reaction to High Rise's jive talk and over-confident manner. In fact, two homes turned away at this point. During this scene, there were 25 negative and three positive responses recorded within 90 seconds. This included negative reactions to specific characters.

On the other hand, the highest positive response within the program occurred when Kevin's mother was in the scene ("Why don't you try for an A?"). The entrance of the mother seemed to invoke positive responses. There was also moderate positive button responding to Kevin and Joanne's interactions.

The button-pushing pattern can be interpreted as positive evaluation of the pro-social scenes and the pro-social message as a whole, and negative evaluation of those scenes which exhibited negative values. It follows that while there was some strong negative reaction within the program, the Percy panel had an extremely positive reaction to the show as a whole.

Table 13
Up and Coming:
Percy Panel Responses

	+ EXCEL	+ INFORM	+ CREDBLE	+ FUNNY	− BORING	− UNBELEV	− DUMB	− ZAP	PERSON POS	PERSON POS
ENTIRE PROGRAM (N = 220) 100%	17.3%	3.6%	17.7%	9.1%	10.9%	8.2%	4.1%	1.8%	16.0%	11.3%
FIRST 28 MINUTES (N = 170) 100%	13.5%	1.2%	12.9%	10.0%	11.8%	10.6%	5.3%	2.4%	17.6%	14.7%
LAST 2 MINUTES (N = 50) 100%	30.0%	12.0%	34.0%	6.0%	8.0%	—	—	—	10%	—

Phone Survey Though the actual number of callers was much larger, 58 viewers completed the phone survey after *Up and Coming*. One-third (34 percent) of the respondents were black. Since blacks make up 3 percent of the population in the Seattle standard metropolitan statistical area, we can see that *Up and Coming* was very successful in reaching its target audience. This provides a large enough sample for us to make comparisons between black and "all other" respondents. "All other" includes whites, Asians, Hispanics and "no response/don't know."

As Table 14 shows, 16 percent of the black respondents and 24 percent of all others were under 20. In comparison, persons under 18 composed eight percent of the KCTS evening viewers in May 1980. The largest percentage of respondents among both groups were 20-34.

Slightly more than half (53 percent) of the black respondents were men while more than half (56 percent) of the non-black respondents were women.

Both groups were well-educated. Over 80 percent of the blacks and 73 percent of all others had at least some college.

Over half of the black respondents lived in households of three or four persons, compared to 32 percent of all other respondents.

Respondents were asked to rate the program overall on a scale of one to ten, with one being the lowest rating and ten being the highest rating. Respondents under 20 gave *Up and Coming* the highest rating (9.1) while blacks and non-black respondents were basically in agreement on their rating (8.6 among blacks and 8.5 among all others). At least 60 percent of the blacks and all others rated the program "very positive."

When asked to rate the program's overall objectives, Table 16 shows that blacks gave slightly higher ratings than did all others in all but one instance. "The program held my attention" was rated highest among both groups (4.8 for blacks and 4.6 for all others).[2] Nothing was rated below 4.4 for blacks or 4.1 for all others.

In comparison with other programs (Table 17), almost three-fourths of both groups said *Up and Coming* was better than *The Jeffersons*. More than one-third of each group said *Up and Coming* was better than *The White Shadow*, though 40.9 percent of the blacks and 48.3 percent of all others said *Up and Coming* was the same as *The White Shadow*. Less than 20 percent of each group was familiar with *The Righteous Apples*.

The open-ended questions for *Up and Coming* (see Tables 18-21) provide additional information about the program. For the most part, overall reaction to the program was positive. Respondents said that they "liked it" and "enjoyed it."

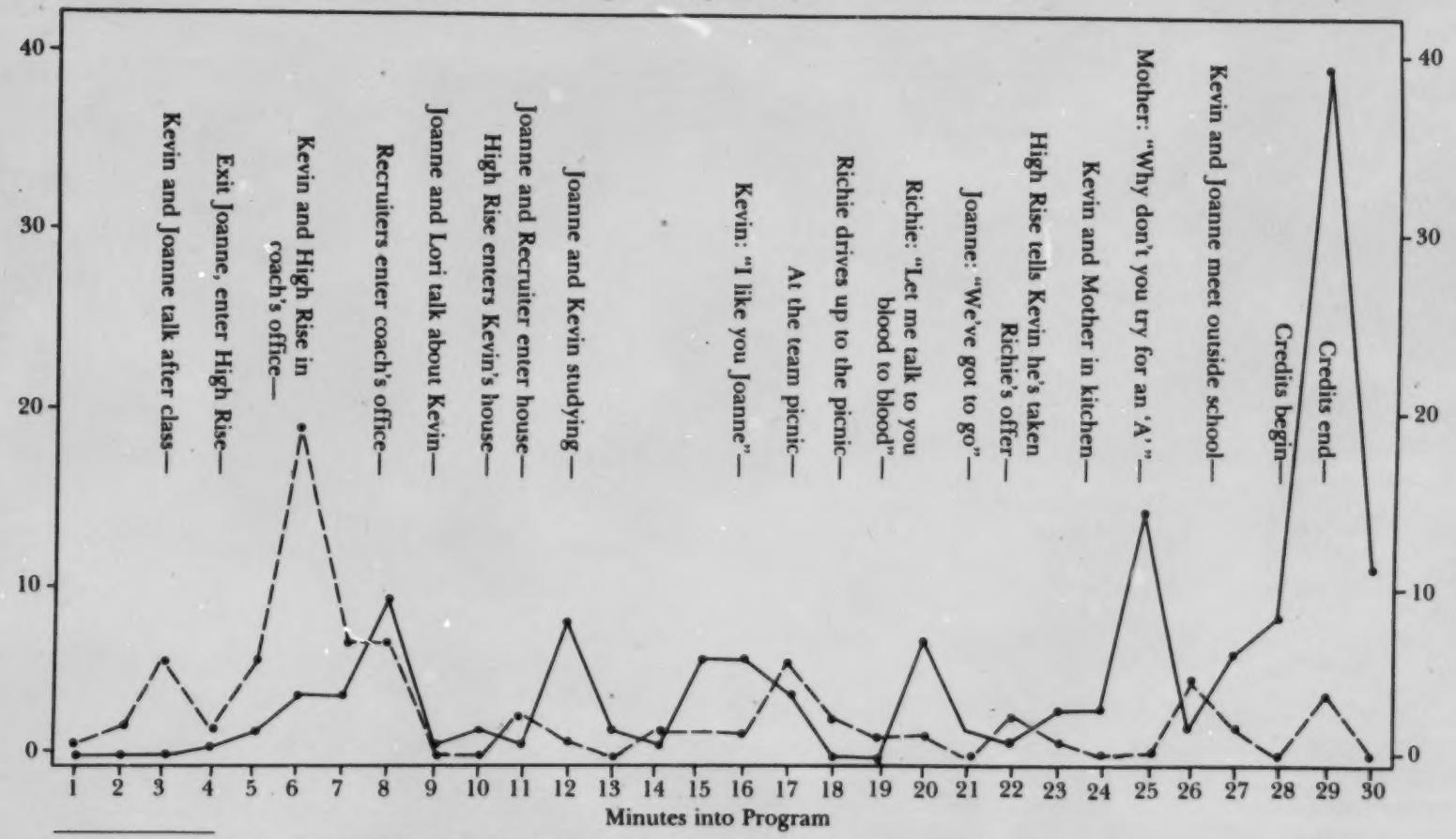
When asked what they specifically liked about the program, many comments focused on the realistic aspects of the program ("very real situation," "believable"). They also liked the people, the acting, and the message.

[2] Rated on a scale of 1-to-5 with 1 meaning "strongly disagree" and 5 meaning "strongly agree."

Figure 2

Percy System Responses to *Up and Coming*

Number of Positive and Negative Responses by One-Minute Intervals


40
30
20
10
0
Kevin and Joanne talk after class—
Exit Joanne, enter High Rise—
Kevin and High Rise in coach's office—
Recruiters enter coach's office—
Joanne and Lori talk about Kevin—
High Rise enters Kevin's house—
Joanne and Recruiter enter house—
Joanne and Kevin studying—
Kevin: "I like you Joanne"—
At the team picnic—
Richie drives up to the picnic—
Richie: "Let me talk to you blood to blood"—
Joanne: "We've got to go"—
High Rise tells Kevin he's taken Richie's offer—
Kevin and Mother in kitchen—
Mother: "Why don't you try for an 'A'"—
Kevin and Joanne meet outside school—
Credits begin—
Credits end—
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
Minutes into Program

Positive Responses (Sum of all EXCELLENT, INFORMATIVE, CREDIBLE, and FUNNY responses)

Negative Responses (Sum of all BORING, UNBELIEVABLE, DUMB and ZAP responses)

Table 14
Up and Coming:
Phone Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

	BLACK (N = 20)	ALL OTHERS (N = 38)
Minority Group Identification		
Black	100.0%	—
White	—	71.1%
Asian/Hispanic	—	7.9
No Response/Don't Know	—	21.0
Age		
Under 20	15.8%	23.5%
20 to 34	68.4	41.2
35 to 49	—	26.5
50 to 64	10.5	8.8
Over 64	5.3	—
Sex		
Male	52.6%	44.1%
Female	47.4	55.9
Education		
Less than High School Graduate	5.9%	9.1%
High School Graduate	11.8	18.2
Some College	47.1	24.2
College Graduate	17.6	36.4
Graduate School	17.6	12.1
Size of Household		
One Person	22.2%	14.7%
Two Persons	16.7	29.4
Three or Four Persons	55.6	32.4
Five or More Persons	5.5	23.5

Table 15
Up and Coming:
Phone Respondents' Overall Evaluation

	BLACK (N = 20)	ALL OTHERS (N = 38)
Very Positive	60.0%	65.8%
Positive	35.0	23.7
Neutral	—	2.6
Negative	5.0	2.6
Very Negative	—	5.3

Table 16
Up and Coming: Phone Survey
Evaluations of Program's Objectives

	BLACK (N = 20)	ALL OTHERS (N = 38)
The program held my attention	4.8[a]	4.6
Up and Coming is a program for people like me	4.6	4.4
The program was well acted	4.6	4.3
Up and Coming was a good change of pace from most television shows	4.4	4.4
The program made me think	4.4	4.1

[a]Ratings on a 5-point scale with 1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree."

Table 17
Up and Coming:
Phone Respondents'
Comparisons with Other Programs

	BLACK (N = 20)	ALL OTHERS (N = 38)
The Jeffersons		
Better	72.7%	73.3%
Same	9.1	13.3
Worse	4.6	6.7
Not Familiar	13.6	6.7
Monty Python's Flying Circus		
Better	50.0%	44.8%
Same	20.0	6.9
Worse	15.0	3.5
Not Familiar	15.0	44.8
The White Shadow		
Better	36.4%	41.4%
Same	40.9	48.3
Worse	4.5	6.9
Not Familiar	18.2	3.4
The Righteous Apples		
Better	9.1%	6.9%
Same	4.5	6.9
Worse	—	3.4
Not Familiar	86.4	82.8

Table 18
Up and Coming:
Phone Respondents'
Overall Reactions to Program

Comments	*Number*
Liked it	11
Enjoyed it	7
Very good	7
Realistic	4
Pretty good	3
It was great	2
Well acted	2
Very positive	2
Educational	2
Excellent	2
Very informative	1
Very wise	1
Excellent considering it was educational	1
Clear cut characters - goals of high value	1
Good education program	1
Believable	1
Very impressed - not like most PTV shows	1
Good taste	1
What took so long for us to get a show like this	1
Good message	1
Very nice	1
Didn't want it to end	1
Actors well above average - dialogue realistic	1
Comical, interesting	1
More black people should watch	1
Entertaining, humorous	1
Entertaining with a message	1
Very naive - didn't understand purpose	1
Perpetuated myths and stereotypes	1
Very negative	1
Need more black programs	1
Disliked	1
Already have too many sitcoms	1

Table 19
Up and Coming:
What Phone Respondents Liked About the Program

Comments	*Number*
Realism	8
The people and the acting	4
The meaning	3
Humorous, educational	2
Got the message across	2
Very real situation	2
Realistic portrayal of black family	2
Naturally done	2
Meaning behind it	2
The way the subject was presented	1
Sneaks up and teaches you	1
Funny with good message about studying	1
Had a message attached to it	1
Everything	1
Like to have my kids see it	1
Actors were dynamite - more real than *White Shadow*	1
The message: Focus on school	1
Teenage son liked it	1
Different aspect of black life	1
Street language and heavy message combination	1
Straight forward dialogue	1
Interesting, good storyline - blacks in starring roles	1
Very uplifting, not overdone - didn't get too emotional	1
Everday, realistic - not like *White Shadow*	1
Fast moving, educational qualities good for youth	1
Only one problem dealt with: centered on family	1
No laugh track-identified with program	1
Not standard stereotype comedy - more depth	1
Especially good for age group worried about future	1
Different thing	1
School situation - real thoughts	1
People and acting	1
Not boring - underlying moral not overwhelming	1
Like *White Shadow* but with something to say	1
Showing black girl with strong self-image	1
Need more programs like this	1
No shows like this in California	1
Smoothly flowing plot, actors, dialogue	1
Positive role model	1
Good show for blacks	1
Believable	1
Down-to-earth, simple	1
Nothing	2

Table 20
Up and Coming:
What Phone Respondents Disliked About the Program

Comments	*Number*
Perpetuated myths and stereotypes	2
Was scheduled too late	2
Needed a stronger storyline, and to be more serious	2
Some of the conversation wasn't realistic	1
Black people were too jivey	1
High Rise being chased by recruiters	1
A little too much jargon	1
Too shallow - not inspirational	1
Jargon - at beginning of program	1
High Rise was overplayed	1
Don't like sitcoms	1
Should be more socially motivated	1
Wonder about ethics of basketball	1
Blacks as sports players	1
High Rise was a stereotype	1
Black kids don't talk that way	1
Didn't say what would happen at end	1
Message too obvious	1
Too much slapstick	1
Nothing	30
Too short	3
That it ended	1
That it's not done more often	1

Table 21
Up and Coming:
Phone Respondents' Perceptions
of the Program's Message

Comments	*Number*
Get a good education	8
Plan for the future	7
Make plans and take steps to get there	3
School and studying are more important than sports	3
Education is important for athletes	2
Work hard to get ahead	1
Making career choices	1
Life future more important than short term gains	1
You can be a jerk but you need good grades	1
You must concentrate on what you'll do in life	1
Must weigh alternatives in light of opportunities	1
You have to work for it	1
Study first, you must have skills	1
Kids have to do it now - make most of high school	1
Kids need to plan	1
Values and options	1
Middle class blacks can make it	1
One should evaluate one's goals	1
Need to work for your dream	1
Example of reality for kids about the future	1
Get away from stereotyped role	1
Black kids in particular must think more practically	1
Young blacks getting it together	1
Don't put all your eggs in one basket (especially basketball)	1
Sports isn't the only thing to get you over	1
You can go further if you have schooling	1
Get more education - don't dream about basketball	1
Have to hit the books	1
Good grades important	1
Brains will win	1
Stop drifting	1
Young black men need options	1
Very little message, not entertaining	1
Don't see the message	1

When respondents were asked about the program's message, they were most likely to describe it in terms of the importance of a good education and the need to plan for the future.

Though the negative comments about the program were limited, there was some feeling that the show perpetuated myths and stereotypes about blacks, athletes and language.

3. Conclusions Based on the evaluation criterion, *Up and Coming* was the more favored of the two programs. The overall response to *Winslow House* was not as enthusiastic as the response to *Up and Coming.*

Admittedly, *Winslow House* was at a disadvantage since it was a pilot rather than an actual episode from a completed series. *Up and Coming* had the disadvantage of being aired 10:30 Saturday night. The different reaction to the programs was evident in both the Percy data and the phone survey response.

The Percy results show that 57 percent more buttons were pushed during *Up and Coming* than during *Winslow House,* indicating a higher degree of viewer involvement with *Up and Coming.* Similarly, the final evaluation for *Up and Coming* was 92 percent positive but only 47 percent positive for *Winslow House.* The majority of final evaluation button pushes for *Winslow House* were negative.

The phone survey showed that both programs were successful in reaching their target audiences. However, *Up and Coming* received higher ratings among its viewers in general and its target audience in particular.

Finally, although respondents to both programs expressed some concern that the characters were stereotyped, these comments were outweighed by the positive remarks about the characters.

Appendix A

Summary Of Major Findings

Winslow House and *Up and Coming*

PERCY PANEL EVALUATION

Up and Coming had a higher level of involvement than did *Winslow House.*

220 Percy response buttons were pushed during *Up and Coming.*

140 Percy response buttons were pushed during *Winslow House.*

The final evaluation for *Up and Coming* was more favorable than *Winslow House.*

92% of the final evaluation buttons for *Up and Coming* were *positive.*

53% of the final evaluation buttons for *Winslow House* were *negative.*

In the final evaluation, *Up and Coming* was more likely to be described as "credible" and "excellent."

34% of the final evaluation buttons for *Up and Coming* were "credible."

30% were "excellent."

20% of the final evaluation buttons for *Winslow House* were "credible."

20% were "dumb."

PHONE SURVEY EVALUATION

Both programs were "successful" in reaching their target audiences.

52% of the *Winslow House* respondents were over 50.

34% of the *Up and Coming* respondents were black.

24% of the *Up and Coming* respondents were under 20.

Up and Coming was more favorably received among its viewers in general and its target audience in particular.

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the lowest rating and 10 being the highest rating, *Up and Coming* was rated:

9.1 among those under 20

8.6 among blacks

8.5 among the non-blacks

8.4 among those over 20

Winslow House was rated:

6.7 among those over 50

7.3 among those under 50

Annex A

Winslow House Evaluation Phone Survey

Thank you for participating in our evaluation of *Winslow House*. We would like to ask you a few questions about the program.

1. First, what was your reaction to the program? _____
2. What did you *like* about the program? _____

   (anything else?) _____
3. What did you *dislike* about the program? _____

   (anything else?) _____
4. On a scale of 1 to 10, with "1" being the lowest rating and "10" being the highest rating, how would you rate *Winslow House*? _____ rating.
5. On a scale of 1 to 5, with "1" being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree," how would you rate the following statements:

	strongly disagree				strongly agree
a. The program held my attention	1	2	3	4	5
b. The program made me think	1	2	3	4	5
c. The characters remind me of people I know	1	2	3	4	5
d. *Winslow House* was a good change of pace from most television shows	1	2	3	4	5
e. The program was well-acted	1	2	3	4	5
f. The program depicts older people in a positive manner	1	2	3	4	5

6. Which character(s) did you like the most? _____
7. Which character(s) did you like the least? _____
8. If *Winslow House* were a weekly series, how often would you watch it?
   _____every week _____about once a month _____seldom or never
9. How did you find out about *Winslow House*? _____

We would like the following information for classification purposes only:

10. How many people live in your household? _____
11. What is your educational background:
    _____ less than high school _____ some college _____ graduate school
    _____ high school graduate _____ college graduate
12. What is your age?_____
13. What is your sex?_____
14. Are you a member of an ethnic minority group?_____

Annex B

Up and Coming Evaluation Phone Survey

Thank you for participating in our evaluation of *Up and Coming*. We would like to ask you a few questions about the program.

1. First, what was your reaction to the program? _____
2. What did you *like* about the program? _____

   (anything else?) _____
3. What did you *dislike* about the program? _____

   (anything else?) _____
4. On a scale of 1 to 10, with "1" being the lowest rating and "10" being the highest rating, how would you rate *Up and Coming*? _____rating.
5. On a scale of 1 to 5, with "1" being "strongly disagree" and "5" being "strongly agree," how would you rate the following statements?

	strongly disagree				strongly agree
a. The program held my attention	1	2	3	4	5
b. The program made me think	1	2	3	4	5
c. *Up and Coming* is a program for people like me	1	2	3	4	5
d. *Up and Coming* was a good change of pace from most television shows	1	2	3	4	5
e. The program was well-acted	1	2	3	4	5

6. Do you think the program was primarily for entertainment or did it have a message? –

   If yes, what was the message? _____
7. Compared with the following programs do you think *Up and Coming* is a better program, not as good or about the same (Please tell me if you are not familiar with these programs.)

	Better	Worse	Same	Not Familiar
a. *The Jeffersons*	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. *Monty Python*	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. *The White Shadow*	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. *Righteous Apples*	_____	_____	_____	_____

8. If *Up and Coming* were a weekly series, how often would you watch it?
   _____every week _____about once a month _____seldom or never
9. How did you find out about *Up and Coming*? _____

We would like the following information for classification purposes only:

10. How many people live in your household? _____
11. What is your educational background?
    _____less than high school _____some college _____graduate school
    _____high school _____college graduate
12. What is your age? _____
13. What is your sex? _____
14. Are you a member of an ethnic minority group? _____

B. PEAC System*

1. ***Winslow House*** This program is a 30-minute pilot that introduces the residents of Winslow House, a well-appointed old house in which about eight persons live, most of them elderly. The residents face problems of advancing age and infirmity, occasionally strained relationships with grown-up children, and intrusions from the world outside. The program series is intended to demonstrate affirmative ways of confronting the problems of advancing age, and to sensitize young viewers to the needs of older people.

Research on the pilot is described in three sections. Section I describes viewers' second-by-second response to the program; test audiences used PEAC equipment to monitor the program's interest and to answer questions after viewing. Section II presents a summary of discussions held with the test groups after viewing the program. In Section III, the findings of the first two sections are used as the basis for a short critical analysis of the program; recommendations for future programs are made.

The purpose of the present test was to obtain three types of information. While viewing, members of the audience monitored their continuing interest in the program, and also recorded the occurrence of any negative stereotyping of older people. After viewing, a number of questions about the program were asked and basic demographic information was obtained. The program was tested on two audience groups, the target consisting of people over age 55, and a general audience made up of people under 55.

a. Subjects

Three viewing locations were arranged in Dayton, Ohio, by Audience Profile Services, a Washington, D.C. based firm. The first location was a senior citizens' apartment building, and the test group was composed of 44 people over age 55. The other locations were the Red Cross building in Dayton and community hall in Fairborn, 15 miles from Dayton. General audience groups were tested here; data for the seven members of these groups who were over 55 were included with that of the first group. In all, the target audience consisted of 51 respondents and the general audience group of 45.

b. Procedure

The test procedure was the same at each location. Viewers were seated in a semi-circle facing a 23-inch color TV. The researchers introduced themselves and explained that they would show a 30-minute drama program about situations that older people might encounter. No additional information was given about the content of the program. The use of the PEAC response units was explained. Viewers were instructed to use a four-point scale (keys A,B,C,D) to record their interest in the program. They were asked to press an appropriate key whenever the program became more or less interesting, and they were encouraged to respond regularly, several times a minute.

---

*Excerpts from a report prepared by George Spears, Ph.D., Lynette Gills and Peter Mateyko

Independent of the interest dimension, viewers were instructed to push the key labelled "Y" each time they noticed negative stereotyping of older people. A large poster showing the response options was placed near the TV set:

A. VERY BORING
B. BORING
C. INTERESTING
D. VERY INTERESTING

Y. STEREOTYPING

After viewing the program, the viewers received questionnaires containing questions about program content and personal statistics (age, education, etc.). The questionnaire is included as Annex C. Viewers answered each question by pushing the response unit key that corresponded to their chosen option for the question.

Following this, the group adjourned to another room to discuss the program with a researcher. Refreshments were served at the conclusion; viewers were not otherwise reimbursed for their time.

Two sessions were conducted in the senior citizens' apartment to accommodate the 44 viewers. One was conducted at each of the two locations.

The sampling rate of the response units was set at 10 seconds: one data entry was logged on each unit every 10 seconds. The program contains 174 sampling intervals.

c. Results and Discussion

Data for the interest level and stereotyping measurements were recorded in different ways. Interest-level data were cumulated across sampling intervals; that is, each response that a person made was considered valid until a new response was made. Although a viewer did not respond during each 10-second interval, the data for empty intervals were filled in to form an unbroken set. The stereotyping data were not cumulated, so an instance of stereotyping was recorded only for that 10 second interval in which the key was pressed.

1) Interest Profiles

The interest-level profiles of the target group and general audience are shown in Figure 3. The general audience is divided into two age groups, 10 to 24 years and 25 to 54 years. After the first seven minutes of the program, the three groups diverge and remain separate throughout most of the program. The target group consistently shows the highest level of interest and the 10- to 24-year-old group the lowest. With the response dimension scaled from 1, Very Boring to 4, Very Interesting, the group means across all 174 time points are:

Target	2.96
25-54 years	2.83
10-24 years	2.51

The profiles begin at about the neutral point, appropriate because viewers were asked to begin there. Interest increases slowly during the first six or seven minutes and then remains at a fairly constant level. The unchanging interest levels would be surprising in a typical drama format in which the action builds in a series of climaxes towards the end of the program; *Winslow House*, however, uses a number of interlocking plots, none of which is more important than the others. The action shifts from one to another, and in the eyes of the audience, one episode rarely builds to an appreciably higher level than those surrounding it. The program ends with one plot resolved (Jake's misappropriated snack finds its way back to him), one unresolved (Mike's broken windows), and one just beginning (Emma's encounter in the supermarket). If these story lines were independent, a sizable shift in interest might be expected; since they are tightly interwoven, interest in one carried over to the next, and the flat interest curves result.

If any generalization can be made about the interest profiles, it is that interest tends to increase in scenes where there is a happy exchange among the actors; interest tends to decrease when there is overt conflict or bad feeling. The presence of young characters also increases interest slightly, as does the first appearance of a character. Jim and Mike helping Elizabeth on the stairs increases interest, but Mike's tirade against hippies loses it, especially for the youngest group. Interest increases in the gift scene between Jim and Millie and during Paul's upbeat efforts to mediate between his parents.

The effects of sex and educational attainment on interest level were tested, but in neither case were meaningful differences found.

2) Stereotyping Profiles

The viewers' perceptions of stereotyping are most appropriately presented as a histogram (Figure 4) in which the bars represent the number of respondents pressing the stereotyping key during each 10-second sampling interval. Since there was a maximum of seven stereotyping responses during any one interval, the ordinate has been scaled to just 20 respondents.

The highest incidence of observed stereotyping occurred during Mike's exchange with the window repairman; 65 responses were recorded over the two-and-a-half-minute scene. The relatively large incidence of stereotyping here is to be expected, since the repairman's attitude was obviously patronizing and he voiced a number of common stereotyping ideas. This scene caused much greater concern among younger viewers, who recorded 50 of the 65 observations.

The deliberate expressions of stereotyped ideas in this scene set a baseline for evaluating other scenes in which stereotyping was presumably not intended. The very low response rates of one or two per sampling interval that occur throughout the program are not meaningful as quantitative data. Analysis of individual data reveals that a large number of viewers pressed the stereotyping key three or four times in the course of the program; the reasons for these isolated observations cannot be ascertained, but they could occur because a scene reminds a viewer of some event or even because of awkward acting.

A few of the peaks in the graph are worth mentioning, although it should be remembered that only about five percent of the sample are concerned with stereotyping in these sections.

TIME	
37,38	Surprisingly, Paul's statement that his daughters want to marry John Travolta and dye their hair lilac.
39-41	The Jewish mother stereotype; reference to the chicken soup queen.
60-63	Mike blasts hippies and immorality.
72	"Who needs a Jewish mother?" (Lucy Ann).
132	Mike accuses Jim of breaking the window.
139,140	Emma plays the Jewish mother.

Clearly, none of these instances of stereotyping has to do with age. Stereotyping about age is not of great concern since the only major instances of it occurred when stereotypes were deliberately expressed by the actors. What a viewer sees during the program can be, however, a very difficult thing from what he or she thinks it is after reflecting on it later; age stereotypes were a primary concern of the general-audience groups in the discussions.

3) Question Data

Five of the multiple-choice questions asked immediately after the program requested an objective appraisal of the program's success. The pattern of responses to these questions is consistent; the target group saw the program in a very favorable light and the general audience in a moderately favorable or neutral one. The differences between groups are in most cases statistically significant.

The image of older Americans portrayed in the program was rated Very Desirable by 39 percent of the target and 12 percent of the general audience. On the negative side, the pattern is reversed: 12 percent of the target and 35 percent of the general audience found an Undesirable or Very Undesirable image. About half of each group rated the image simply Desirable.

IMAGE OF OLDER AMERICANS

A Very Desirable
B Desirable
C Undesirable
D Very Undesirable
* Totals

	A	B	C	D	*
Under 55	5	23	15	0	43
55 and up	19	47	4	2	49
*	24	47	19	2	92

Chi-square = 16.23 with 3 df, $p<.01$

Similarly, the target group saw the dramatic events as more true to life. Forty-five percent rated the possibility of their occurrence as Very Likely, as compared to 20 percent of the general audience.

REAL LIFE SITUATIONS

A Very Likely
B Likely
C Unlikely
D Very Unlikely
* Totals

	A	B	C	D	*
Under 55	9	27	7	2	45
55 and up	22	19	6	2	49
*	31	46	13	4	94

Chi-square = 6.76 with 3 df, $p<.05$

The overall quality of production (acting, plot, characterization) was also rated more highly by the target group.

QUALITY OF PRODUCTION

A Excellent
B Good
C Fair
D Poor
* Totals

	A	B	C	D	*
Under 55	6	16	17	6	45
55 and up	26	8	10	5	49
*	32	24	27	11	94

Chi-square = 16.93 with 3 df, $p<.001$

Viewers were asked to choose which of five statements best expressed the strength of the program. Since the two groups did not differ significantly in their ratings, the combined percentage choosing each option is shown below:

It demonstrates to both young and old effective ways of communicating with each other.	34%
It alerts viewers to the problems and needs of older Americans.	25%
It helps us to a better understanding of ourselves and our relationships with others.	18%
It demonstrates strategies for dealing with life problems.	11%
It dispels myths people hold about growing old.	0%
None of the above.	9%

Seventy-five percent of the target stated that they would definitely recommend the program to others, as compared to 30 percent of the general audience.

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND WATCHING?

A Yes
B No
C Maybe
* Totals

	A	B	C	*
Under 55	13	15	16	44
55 and up	36	7	5	48
*	49	22	21	92

Chi-square = 19.33 with 2 df, p<.001

In general, the target group saw a well produced program that is true to life and that presents older people attractively. The general audience was not nearly as enthusiastic, but was generally more neutral than negative.

The next set of questions asks the viewer how much relevance and meaning the program had for him. Here the responses are not as consistent as before.

Viewers were asked whether they found the program content personally relevant. Seventy-eight percent of the general audience chose the middle options on the four-point scale, indicating little to moderate personal relevance. The target group, perhaps in light of their response to the previous questions, were almost equally divided among the four options.

CONTENT PERSONALLY RELEVANT?

A Very Relevant
B Relevant
C Of Little Relevance
D Irrelevant
* Totals

	A	B	C	D	*
Under 55	3	19	17	7	46
55 and up	10	13	11	14	48
*	13	32	28	21	94

Chi-square = 8.47 with 3 df, p<.05

Asked simply whether the program had a message, 60 percent of the target and 49 percent of the general audience said yes. However, given a list of messages to choose from, most viewers found an option that appropriately expressed their feelings. The pattern of responses for the two groups is different ($x_4^2 = 14.2$, p<.01):

	General Audience Percent	Target Percent
Old age can be rewarding if you lead a productive life and keep busy.	30	54
Young and old people have very different morals, values, and principles.	39	18
If you don't use it, you will lose it.	20	6
Old people are vulnerable, easy targets for crime and vandalism.	9	22
None of these	2	0

A disquieting aspect of these data is the relatively large number of older people who saw their own vulnerability as the main message. This topic was important in their discussion as well. Younger viewers did not choose this option, possibly because it is not of immediate personal concern.

The last set of questions to be discussed concerns the perception of the characters in the program. Choices for the most interesting character are shown below. Emma is the clear favorite of the target group, chosen by a full third. Jack and Millie rate equally highly among the younger viewers, with Emma very close.

MOST INTERESTING CHARACTER

A	None
B	Emma
C	Jake
D	Paul
E	Mary
F	Elizabeth
G	Lucy Ann
H	Emily
I	Mike
J	Jim
*	Totals

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Under 55	3	7	10	3	4	1	1	10	4	2
55 and up	9	17	5	3	2	2	0	5	6	2
*	12	24	15	6	6	3	1	15	10	4

Chi-square = 12.57 with 9 df, $p<.05$

Viewers were asked to identify any character who did not seem "real." Fifty-six percent were satisfied that all seemed real, and 8 percent said that none did. Individuals chosen as "not real" were Jake (8 percent), Emma, Mary, and Elizabeth (7 percent), Milly (3 percent), and Mike (2 percent). Paul, Lucy Ann and Jim were not seen as unconvincing by any viewers. In sum, no one character stood out as unbelievable.

Viewers were also asked to identify any character who portrayed an undesirable image of older people. Mike was the only character to be singled out by more than three people, being chosen by 14 percent of the target and 26 percent of the general audience. However, 24 percent of the general audience stated that all the characters portrayed this image! Again, this judgment will be dealt with in the discussion data.

One final question asked whether viewers would prefer any particular day for the program to be aired. Nearly 90 percent had no preference, and the choices of the remainder were divided almost evenly among the seven days, so no best day can be selected.

4) Discussion Data

The discussions found that target and general audience groups were divided even more sharply than in the trends manifested in the PEAC data. The tone of the discussion with the residents of the senior citizens' apartment was enthusiastic, and with each of the general audience groups critical and negative. In any focus group, group dynamics can play a major role; once the tone of a discussion is set, perhaps by a few dominant individuals, it

can be very difficult for even an experienced group leader to change it or to swing the group to a fresh perspective. Thus, it is possible that the three discussion groups simply got off to different starts, the target group an enthusiastic one and the other groups not. Arguing against this possibility are the PEAC data and the fact that the few participants in the general sessions who were over 55 made points very similar to those in the target sessions. We believe, then, that the arguments advanced by old and young are a function of age rather than a result of group dynamics.

(a) Target Group

In general, members of the target group were open to the events and characters in the program, and were sensitive to the subtleties of the relationships among characters. They found the *Winslow House* setting natural enough; a few compared it to their own apartment residence. There was no mention of the idea that the characters were not fleshed out, something that surfaced in the general audience discussions. In all, it was very difficult to elicit critical comments about most aspects of the program.

Two events, however, were misinterpreted by at least a few viewers. First, Jim was perceived as pushing Mike during their confrontation over the broken window; these viewers had possibly accepted Mike's judgment of Jim's guilt. Second, the two young men in the supermarket were seen as helping Emma with her parcels.

The gift scene between Millie and Jim was acclaimed; Millie retained her pride while still accepting the gift, a combination of emotions that many members recognized as difficult but important. They also recognized Jim's responsiveness to Millie's needs.

The issue of the relationship between young and old was fairly central to the discussion. There was a consensus that the young very often fail to understand the old, but equally that the old misunderstand the young. Unthinking criticism and blame of the young (by Mike) and "making a nuisance of yourself" (Emma's visit to Paul's house) were mentioned as convincing examples of this misunderstanding. The program was considered as a possible bridge between the generations, something that could usefully be shown in schools. Some doubted, however, that children would be interested.

When questioned about the occasional rough language in the program, they showed a mixed response. A few found it annoying, but most accepted it as true to everyday life.

Only one aspect of the program provoked deeply felt criticism: the presence and threat of violence. The consensus was that violence, and unpleasant things in general, should be minimized, whereas the accomplishments and joys of age should be played up. Typical comments here were:

> "Older people have enough fears: they should not be frightened more by seeing fears projected on the screen."
> "These are my best years, when responsibilities are over. Bring out the pleasures of growing old!"
> "We need to see the brighter side. We fear dependence; why should we view it? What is the good side?"

In a nutshell, the target group found the program a very rewarding experience; their only suggestion would be to make it even more so.

(b) General Audience

The tone of these discussions was highly critical, although there were a few dissenting voices from older members of the groups. The final judgment was that they disliked the program and would not care to watch it, a somewhat harsher opinion than they expressed in the multiple-choice questions.

Most viewers said that the characterization of older people was at the root of their criticism. Their major points were:

- The characters were atypical, not like people in the viewers' own experience. Viewers could not identify with the actors; they said that they would not like to be like that in their own old age. They did not know people like the characters in real life.
- The characters were stereotyped. The program used "every stereotype in the book," including the Jewish landlord, the Jewish mother, and the patronizing attitude of the window repairman toward the aged. The program reinforced myths instead of dispelling them.
- The characters were feeble and powerless beyond their years; Mike looked 60 but acted 84. The viewers found little that was attractive in the characters, little that they could like. "Why did they all have to look old?" was one comment. Many found the characters underdeveloped, a result, they said, of packing too many people and events into 30 minutes.
- As for production values, the format was likened to a soap opera. The acting was considered generally bad. The opening scene dragged.
- In comparison with other TV programs, *Winslow House* was seen as somewhat different in its portrayal of old people. A few regarded this difference as an improvement, but most had difficulty in specifying just what the differences were.

To conclude, there was one quite approving comment. The gift scene (Millie and Jim) was considered touching and true to life. Viewers responded particularly to Jim's graciousness. The acting was judged better in this scene, as well.

d. Analysis and Recommendations

In this section, we step back from the reporting of data and attempt to develop a context in which the quantitative PEAC results and the discussion come together. There is clearly some explaining to be done, since the discussion and PEAC data give different impressions of the program, particularly for the general audience groups. To begin with, it should be noted that the two evaluation techniques yield very different kinds of information. The PEAC profiles give an approximation of what people watching a program in their homes might think as they viewed; they reflect the instantaneous response of individual viewers to the action on the screen. By contrast, the discussion data record the considered opinions of viewers some time after viewing, and what an individual says is inevitably influenced by forces that operate within the group. In the focus group, people who probably spend very little time thinking critically about television are asked to analyze a program in detail, reflect on their emotional and intellectual reactions, respond to questions that might never have occurred to them otherwise, and do all this in public. These groups, however, provide a flesh-and-blood reality that can be as important to understanding the program as the quantitative data.

To begin with, let us consider the general audience. Their interest profiles were neutral to mildly favorable and their stereotyping profile showed no significant incidence of age-related stereotypes, except in the one scene in which it might be expected. Yet in the discussion, the mood bordered on hostility and stereotyping was seen everywhere. With no data to explain their depth of feeling, some speculation is necessary. The following interpretation goes somewhat beyond the data collected, but it is consistent with the data and is advanced as the most likely hypothesis.

Consider the main point of criticism of each group. The younger viewers saw unwelcome stereotypes in the program, the older ones too much unpleasantness and violence. We would suggest that both concerns stem from the same elements of the program, and that both could be remedied with the same stroke of the scriptwriter's pen. Let us look at each in turn.

The target group's concerns are transparent enough. These viewers were open to the characters and events in the program and honest in expressing their opinions. Moreover, the sources of unpleasantness that they perceived in the program were topics of common concern, things they probably talked about with their friends. They had no reason to hide their feelings.

The younger audience, on the other hand, were less willing to examine the source of their anger. It was not caused simply by a dull program; dull programs typically generate dull discussions. Moreover, we do not accept that the program can objectively be faulted for massive stereotyping; the general audience did not notice this while viewing, and, more important, the experts on the subject, the target audience, did not.

The hypothesis we would like to advance is that the program rubbed some raw nerves; the negative reaction of the younger viewers stems mainly from anxieties or uncertainties that they have about aging. One of these may be that young people fear the prospect of growing old, but we do not have to look for such intangible reasons. In our society, we are isolated from old people most of the time. We therefore tend to lose touch with them, and when we do see them, we find it difficult to talk to them because there is no common ground. Most of us are not in contact with old people in our daily lives, so we are unaware, except in an abstract and possibly stereotyped way, of their needs and their outlook on life. We live in a future-oriented society; the old are part of the past and sometimes an unwelcome intrusion into our plans. If our society, by whatever means, has isolated old people from the mainstream, it has also isolated us from them, and reestablishing contact can be an uncertain and painful process.

The program clearly failed to establish that contact. The younger viewers did not open their minds to the concerns of age, but rather fought against it, charging stereotyping, bad acting, and so on.

There were, however, two scenes that the younger viewers responded to favorably. The more important one is with Jim and Millie. Here youth and age came together as equals, showing mutual respect. Neither presented a threat to the other, and each left enriched. The second was Millie's invitation to Jake, again a wholly affirmative encounter.

The conclusion, we believe, is that both older and younger audiences respond to the optimistic portrayal of age, though for different reasons. Those who see themselves as old wish to celebrate their age, to affirm its joys, accomplishments, and above all, its strength. They do not wish to dwell on its darker side. Those who define themselves as young are aware of a gap between themselves and the aged. They do not wish to see stereotypes con-

firmed or to observe *cliched* roles of impotence and infirmity, since this causes discomfort.

The common portrayal of old people on television is, in fact, negative. George Gerbner and others have done content analyses that show that old people are typically portrayed as victims of other people's actions rather than agents of their own fate. In *Winslow House*, clear victimization is restricted to Emma, and perhaps Mike. The incidence of impotence, of being at the mercy of another's action or of circumstance, is more widespread. In fact, no character in the drama resolves his or her problem through his or her own actions:

- Millie's immediate problem of her depleted food budget is resolved through others' generosity and through circumstance.
- Jake's problems are resolved in a roundabout way. His appreciation of his wife's cooking is engineered by Paul. The problem of the missing food is resolved by circumstance; fortune, in the persons of Jim and Millie, is instrumental.
- Emma begins the drama with no problem except Jake's depression. That is solved through the actions of others. Later she is set up as the victim of random violence.
- Mike is another victim of actions beyond his control. He lashes out, mistakenly, at Jim, but his action brings no solution.

e. Conclusions

For the target audience, the program is successful in its present form. No changes in emphasis are absolutely necessary; however a lesser emphasis on the nearness of unpleasant events would increase satisfaction. A greater emphasis on strong, attractive role models would increase viewers' identification with the characters and could lead to the desired effects on attitude and behavior.

The program is unsuccessful in attracting a younger audience. Although conclusive evidence is lacking, the root of their dislike seems to be in the characterization of the older people. The impotence and vulnerability of these characters come through very strongly; their compassion and humanity are overwhelmed. The characters are not attractive to younger viewers, so they cannot serve as models for changing attitudes towards aging.

The portrayal of more active and powerful old people should therefore meet the criticisms of both old and young. The old would find support for their need to control their world. The young would see that the old are indeed able to act effectively, and that they are deserving of respect. The young need to know that they can learn from the life experience of the old and that they have something to look forward to in their own old age.

We propose that with this change in characterization, younger viewers would see believable characters on the screen rather than stereotypes. They might also rate the acting more highly.

One element of the solution is to dispel the image of old people as isolated from the young. This might be achieved by adding another young person and increasing the number of productive encounters between young and old. Perhaps the older residents of *Winslow House* could be shown to contribute in concrete ways to the well-being of the younger residents.

The program at present is a sensitive portrayal of the problems of aging. In order for it to have broad appeal, there must be strength in the characters as well as the vulnerability we are all familiar with. Both groups want to see aging as an opportunity for growth. If a balance between strength and weakness can be struck, the series should stand as an important and worthwhile document.

Figure 3

PEAC Viewer Involvement Data on *Winslow House* for Three Viewer Age Groups

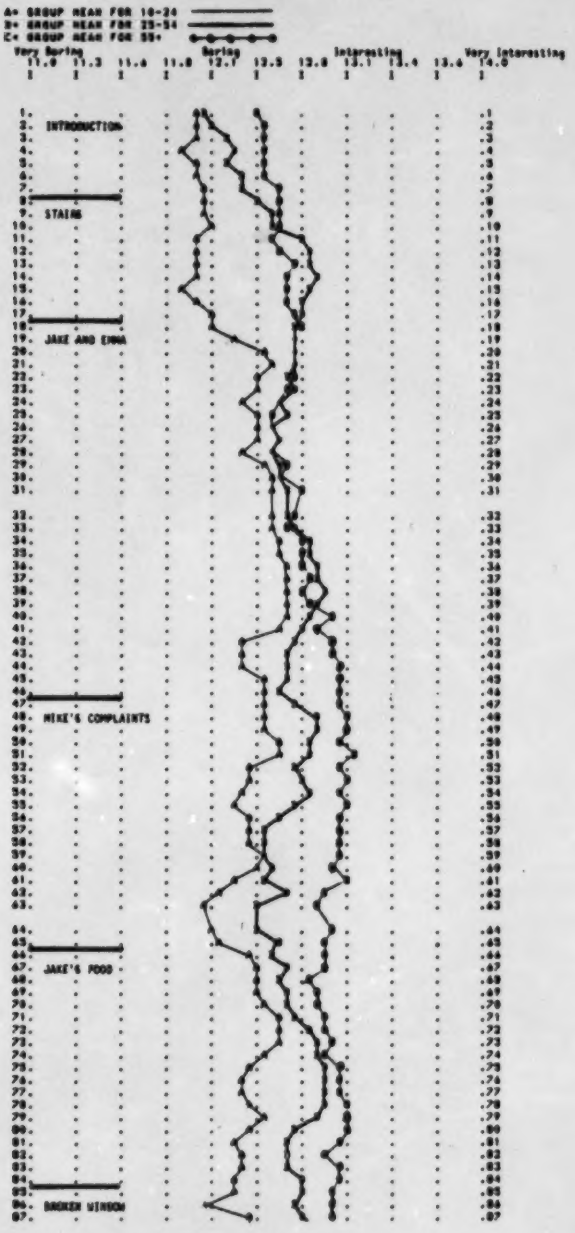


Figure 3 (cont.)

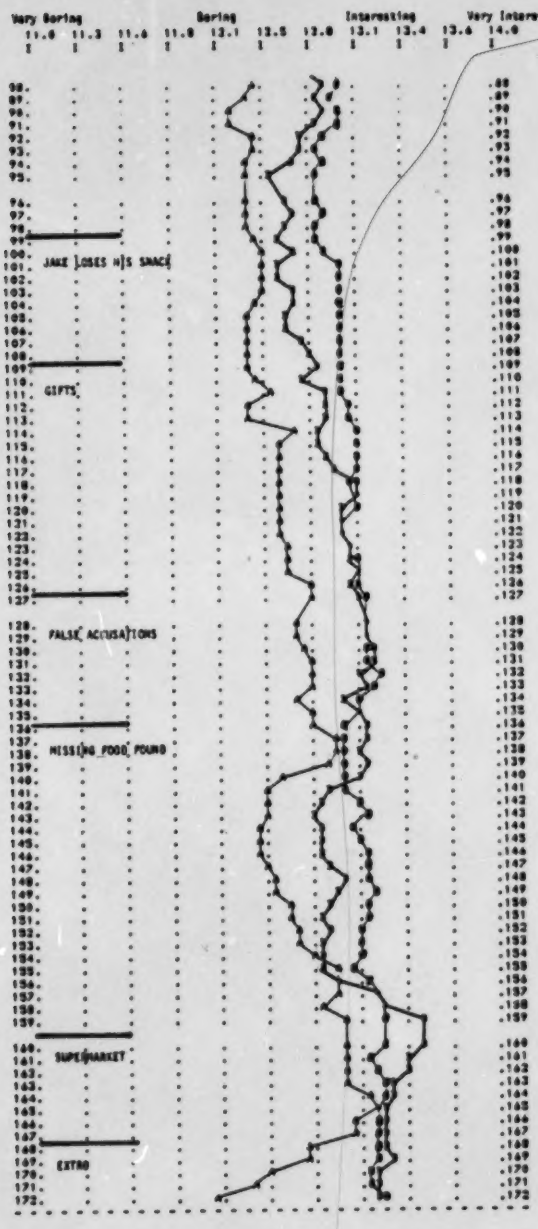


Figure 4

PEAC Monitoring of Stereotyping Incidents in *Winslow House* for Two Viewer Age Groups

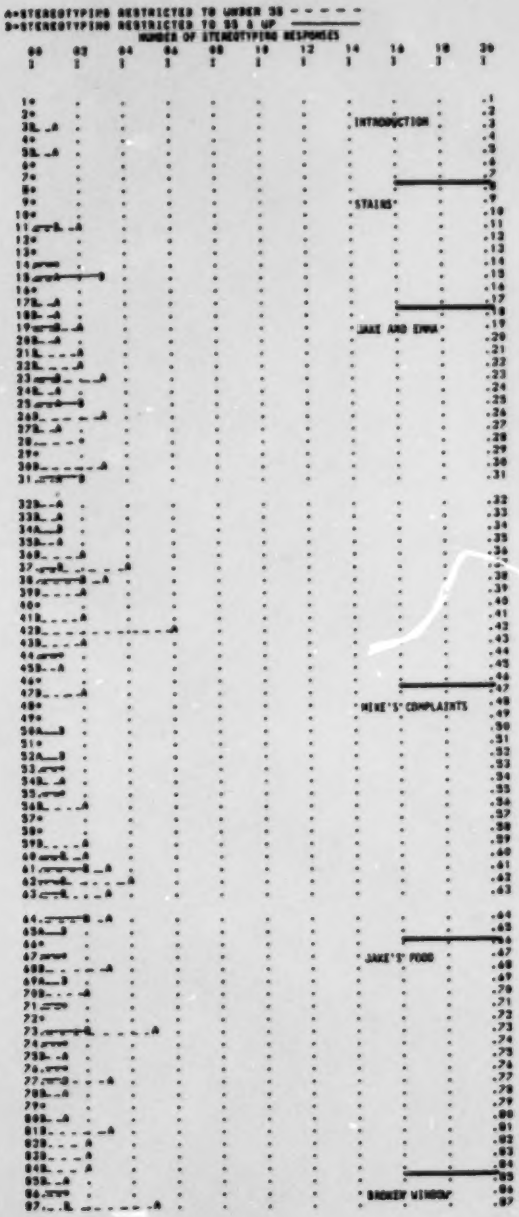
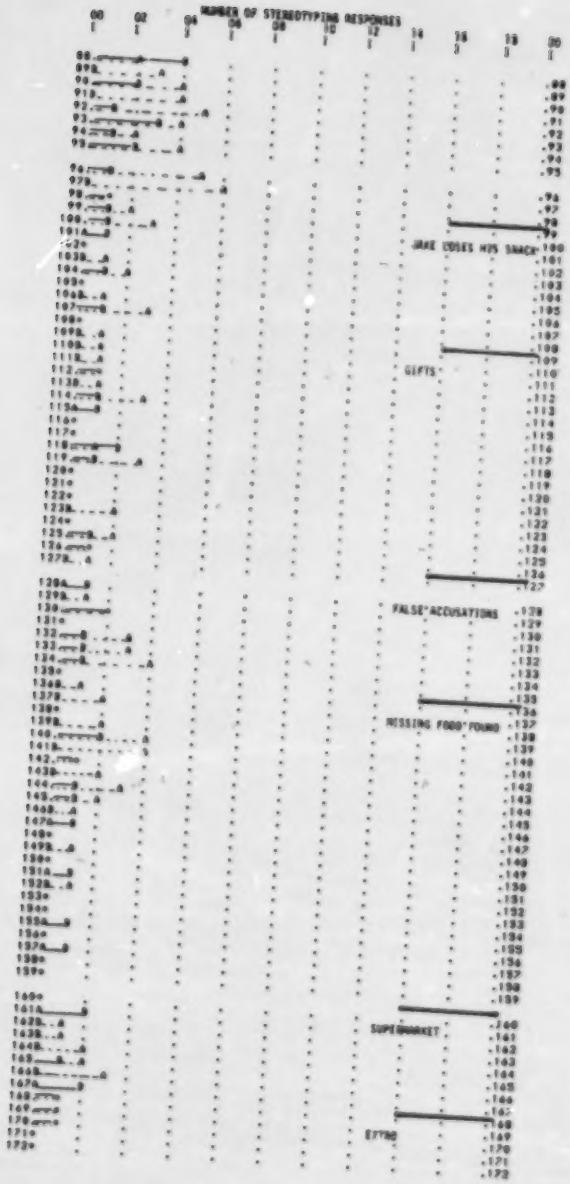


Figure 4 (cont.)



Annex C
Winslow House
Questionnaire

1. Is the content of the program of personal relevance to you? Would you judge the program as being . . .

Very relevant	1
Relevant	2
Irrelevant	3
Very Irrelevant	4

2. Which of the following do you perceive as being the strength of the program:

It alerts viewers to the problems and needs of older Americans	1
It demonstrates strategies for dealing with life problems	2
It helps us to better understand ourselves and our relationships to others	3
It demonstrates to both young and old effective ways of communicating with one another	4
It dispels myths people hold about growing old	5
None of the above	6

3. Consider the acting, the story, and characters. Overall, how would you rate the quality of this production?

Excellent	1
Good	2
Fair	3
Poor	4

4. If you were to compare this program with other programs on television, would you say that *Winslow House* portrays older people . . .

More negatively	1
More positively	2
In the same way	3

5. Does *Winslow House* deal with real life situations? Would you say that such events are . . .

Very likely	1
Likely	2
Unlikely	3
Very Unlikely	4

6. Was there any particular character who did not seem "real"?

None of them seemed real	1
All of them seemed real	2
Emma Silver (landlord)	3
Jake Silver (landlord)	4
Paul Silver (son)	5
Mary (The activist)	6
Elizabeth (The blind sister)	7
Lucy Ann (The teacher's aid)	8
Emily (impoverished widow)	A
Jim (young law student)	Y
Mike Green (the gruff widower)	N

7. Which character did you find most interesting?

None of them	1
Emma Silver (landlord)	2
Jake Silver (landlord)	3
Paul Silver (son)	4
Mary (The activist)	5
Elizabeth (The blind sister)	6
Lucy Ann (The teacher's aid)	7
Emily (impoverished widow)	8
Jim (young law student)	N
Mike Green (the gruff widower)	Y

8. In general, did you feel that the program presented a desirable or undesirable image of older Americans?

A very desirable image	1
A desirable image	2
An undesirable image	3
A very undesirable image	4

9. Was there any character in particular who you felt portrayed an *undesirable* image of older Americans?

None of them	1
Emma Silver (landlord)	2
Jake Silver (landlord)	3
Paul Silver (son)	4
Mary (The activist)	5
Elizabeth (The blind sister)	6
Lucy Ann (The teacher's aid)	7
Emily (impoverished widow)	8
Jim (young law student)	N
Mike Green (the gruff widower)	Y

10. While viewing the program, did you think more of growing old?

Yes	1
No	2

11. In your opinion, did this program have a message?

Yes, it had a message	1
No, it didn't have a message	2

12. What was the main message of this program?

Old age can be rewarding if you lead a productive life and keep yourself busy	1
Young people and old people have very different morals, values, and principles	2
If you don't use it, you will lose it	3
Old people are vulnerable, easy targets for crime and vandalism	4

13. Would you recommend to others that they watch this program?

Yes	1
No	2
Maybe	3

14. How often would you view the program?

As often as possible	1
Sometimes	2
Never	3
I would not have the time	4

15. Which day would you *most* likely view the program?

Any weekday	1
Monday	2
Tuesday	3
Wednesday	4
Thursday	5
Friday	6
Saturday	7
Sunday	8
I would *not* view it at all	N

16. Sex:

Male	1
Female	2

17. Age:

14-19	1
20-24	2
25-34	3
35-49	4
50-54	5
55 and over	6

18. Are you a parent?

Yes	1
No	2

19. What is the last level of education that you've completed?

Grade School	1
Some High School	2
Completed High School	3
Commercial/Technical	4
Some University	5
Completed University	6

2. *Up and Coming* This report describes the evaluation of the 30-minute pilot program from the new dramatic series, *Up and Coming*. In the pilot, Kevin, a high school junior from a black, middle-class family, comes to the realization that in order to have control over his own life as an adult he must begin now by taking time out from his active social life for career planning and preparation. The program strives to illustrate how teens, with the help of their families, adjust to the often turbulent, universal demands of adolescent life. It attempts to present a more positive, varied perspective of black life than is commonly seen on television and to discourage racial stereotyping.

Research was conducted with the pilot to assess interest in the program among both black audiences and general audiences. The research also assessed viewers' perceptions with regard to a number of specific issues, including: the relevance of the topic, the quality of the production, the characterization, the presence of stereotyping, and the merit of this program compared with others. The data for this evaluation were acquired through focus group discussions, questionnaires, and by using the PEAC equipment to monitor audiences' moment-to-moment response to the program. Following a brief description of the procedure, the results of the evaluation are presented. The paper concludes with a discussion of the findings, and recommendations are made for future programs.

The purpose of the present test was to obtain three types of information. While viewing, members of the audience monitored their interest in the program on a continuing basis and would also record the occurrence of any negative stereotyping of black people. After viewing, a number of questions about the program were asked and basic demographic information was obtained. The program was tested with two audience groups, the target, consisting of black people, and a predominantly white, general audience.

a. Subjects

Three viewing locations were arranged in Dayton, Ohio by Audience Profile Research, a Washington, D.C. based firm. The first location was the Model Neighborhood Center, and the test group was composed of 37 black people. The other locations were the Red Cross building in Dayton and the Knights of Columbus Hall in Fairborn, 15 miles from Dayton. A total of 59 respondents composed the general audience.

b. Procedure

The test procedure was the same at each location. Viewers were seated in a semi-circle facing a 23-inch color TV. The researchers introduced themselves and explained that they would be shown a 30-minute drama program. No additional information was given about the content of the program. The use of the PEAC response units was explained. Viewers were instructed to use a four-point scale (keys A,B,C,D) to record their interest in the program. They were asked to press an appropriate key whenever the program became more or less interesting, and they were encouraged to respond regularly, several times a minute.

Independent of the interest dimension, viewers were instructed to push the key labelled "Y" each time they noticed negative stereotyping of black people.

A large poster showing the response options was placed near the TV set:

A VERY BORING
B BORING
C INTERESTING
D VERY INTERESTING

Y STEREOTYPING

After viewing the program, questionnaires containing questions about program content and personal statistics (age, education, etc.) were distributed. The questionnaire is included as Annex D. Viewers answered each question by pushing the response unit key that corresponded to their chosen option for the question.

Following this, the group adjourned to another room to discuss the program with a researcher. Refreshments were served at the conclusion; viewers were not otherwise reimbursed for their time.

Two sessions were conducted at the Model Neighborhood Center to accommodate the 37 viewers. One was conducted at each of the other locations.

The sampling rate of the response units was set at ten seconds, thus one data entry was logged on each unit every ten seconds. The program contains 174 sampling intervals.

c. Findings

1) The Sample

Each of the two audiences had approximately equal proportions of male and female respondents. Respondents ranged from 13 years of age to 55 years of age and older; those in the 14-19 age category composed the single largest group (28 percent). Appendix B describes the age of participants in the sample audiences. Members of the black audience varied widely in the amount of formal education they had completed. In comparison, the general audience was more homogeneous; 76 percent were high school graduates. Sixty-eight percent of the black audience and 66 percent of the general audience were parents.

2) Interest in the Program

Data for the interest level was cumulated across sampling intervals, that is, each response that a person made was considered to remain valid until a new response was made. Thus, although a viewer did not respond during each ten second interval, the data for empty intervals was filled to form an unbroken set.

The response of the two audiences to *Up and Coming* appears in Figure 5. The profile designates the mean key pressed by the black audience and by the general audience at every ten-second interval. The rating scale, at the top of the profile, ranges from 11.0 (I find the program very boring) to 14.0 (I find the program very interesting). The time points appear at the margins; each represents ten seconds of program time.

As seen in Figure 5, the two audiences differ with regard to their interest in the program. The black audience, in comparison to the general audience, consistently judged the program as being more interesting. During the first twelve minutes of the program, the response of the black audience fluctuated between "boring" and "interesting." At approxi-

mately time point 68, (the point in the program where Joanne arrives at Kevin's house) the audience began to indicate greater interest in what they viewed. This level of interest was generally maintained through the remainder of the program.

The response of the general audience followed a similar pattern. They tended to find the first twelve minutes of the program "boring" and then showed slightly more interest in the remainder. Discussions with both groups, after viewing the program, corroborated these findings; they reported that the first part of the program was "slow" or appeared "to drag."

The younger members of the audience indicated more interest in the program than older members. This trend, however, was not evident among the general audience. Beginning with the scene in the kitchen with Kevin and Joanne, the older members in the general audience (35 years of age and older) displayed greater interest in the program than the younger members.

Black adolescents differed considerably from white adolescents in their response to the program (Figure 6). Five minutes into the program, the ratings of black adolescents ranged from "interesting" to "very interesting"; the ratings of white adolescents ranged from "boring" to "neutral." There were no meaningful differences between sexes in their interest ratings of the program.

In summary, the interest profiles for all audiences appear somewhat flat. The absence of exaggerated peaks and valleys would suggest that viewers do not perceive the program as having notably climactic or boring scenes. Joanne's visit to Kevin's house, however, appears a turning point in the program. From this point on, audiences became more interested. Discussions with the groups after viewing the program supported these findings; the kitchen scene appeared most memorable. Among black audiences, adolescents exhibited the most interest at the turning point. Among the general audiences, those 35 years of age and older exhibited greater interest.

3) Relevance of the Program

After viewing the program, the audiences were asked how personally relevant they found the content. The response of the two audiences appears in Table 22. The findings corroborated the interest profiles. Black audiences find the program more relevant than do the general audiences. Eighty-eight percent of the black audience indicated it was "relevant" or "very relevant" compared with 43 percent of the general audience.

Table 22

Relevance of *Up and Coming* in PEAC Tests to Black and General Audiences

	Black Audience Percent	General Audience Percent	Total Percent
Very relevant	51	9	26
Relevant	37	34	35
Irrelevant	11	40	28
Very irrelevant	0	17	10
	—	—	—
	100	100	100
	(N = 35)	(N = 53)	(N = 88)

There appeared to be no meaningful differences among viewers of different ages in their ratings of program relevance.

4) Quality of Production

The respondents were asked a number of questions concerning the overall quality of the production and the believability of events and characters.

When asked to consider the story line, the acting, and the characters, the audiences differed in their overall rating of the production's quality. Black audiences tended to judge the program as good (56 percent) or excellent (28 percent), whereas the general audience judged the program as good (42 percent) or fair (32 percent) (Table 23).

Table 23

Rating of Production Quality of *Up and Coming* in PEAC Tests by Black and General Audiences

Rating	Black Audience Percent	General Audience Percent	Total Percent
Excellent	28	12	18
Good	56	42	47
Fair	17	32	26
Poor	0	14	8
	—	—	—
	100	100	100
	(N = 36)	(N = 59)	(N = 95)

Discussions with the audiences further revealed that they generally found the program "too cluttered," too many events were initiated in too short a time. Audiences also commented on the dialogue; they found it unconvincing at times and disliked what they perceived as the "overuse" of slang.

With regard to the believability of program, both groups perceived the story events as "likely" or "very likely" (Table 24).

Table 24

Audience Perception of the Believability of Events in *Up and Coming*

	Black Audience Percent	General Audience Percent	Total Percent
The events are very likely	42	28	40
The events are likely	45	40	42
The events are unlikely	9	21	16
The events are very unlikely	3	2	2
	—	—	—
	100	100	100
	(N = 33)	(N = 58)	(N = 91)

In discussion, those who had indicated the events were unlikely did not believe a recruiter would follow an athlete into a friend's home. They also noted that a middle-class mother would be more aware of her son's grades in school, and conversely, the son would be more aware of his mother's career aspirations.

When asked which characters seemed most true to life, the largest proportion of respondents (57 percent of the black audience and 46 percent of the general audience) indicated that "all the characters" seemed realistic.

5) Comprehension of the Message

Viewers in both audiences were asked to choose, from a number of alternatives, what they perceived as the strength of the program. The alternatives appear in Table 25. The largest proportion of the black audience (36 percent) indicated that the program alerts viewers to the kinds of problems black families encounter; only 4 percent of the general audience perceived this as the strength of the program. The general audience was more inclined to see the program as providing strategies for dealing with life problems (31 percent) or as alerting viewers to the problems of adolescents (30 percent). This latter option was also selected by 31 percent of the black audience.

Table 25

Audience Perception of Strength of *Up and Coming*

Strength	Black Audience Percent	General Audience Percent	Total Percent
It alerts viewers to the kinds of problems adolescents encounter	31	30	30
It alerts viewers to the kinds of problems black families encounter	36	4	17
It demonstrates strategies for dealing with life problems	6	31	21
It helps us to better understand ourselves and our relationships to others	8	4	6
It demonstrates to parents and adolescents effective ways of communicating with one another	11	15	13
None of the above	8	17	13
	100	100	100
	(N = 36)	(N = 54)	(N = 90)

Both groups thought the program had conveyed a message. The black audience, however, reached greater consensus on which message had been conveyed; 49 percent said it was a lesson that "one should prepare for one's career early in life." As seen in Table 26, the general audience was more divided in their perceptions.

Table 26

Audience Perception of the Main Message of *Up and Coming*

Message	Black Audience Percent	General Audience Percent	Total Percent
You should prepare for your career early in life	49	27	36
Adolescents are often torn between social life and hard work	3	29	18
Academic success opens many doors for the future	19	24	22
Women usually take life more seriously than men	11	2	6
You should strive for the best in life and never settle for less	19	16	17
No message	0	2	1
	—	—	—
	100	100	100
	(N = 37)	(N = 51)	(N = 88)

6) Comparing the Program to Others

After viewing the program, the audiences were asked to compare *Up and Coming* with similar programs now appearing on television. When compared with programs such as *White Shadow, Room 222, Good Times, The Jeffersons, Welcome Back Kotter, What's Happening,* and *Diff'rent Strokes,* a majority of both audiences (67 percent of the black audience and 75 percent of the general audience) perceived the program as being "similar" or "very similar."

The black audiences generally indicated that they thought *Up and Coming* had portrayed black people "more positively" than they are usually portrayed in television programs. As shown in Table 27, however, the general audience tended to report that blacks had been portrayed "in the same way" as in other programs.

Table 27

Audience Perception of the Portrayal of Black People in *Up and Coming*

	Black Audience Percent	General Audience Percent	Total Percent
Blacks are portrayed more negatively than in other programs	23	16	18
Blacks are portrayed more positively than in other programs	54	31	40
Blacks are portrayed in the same way	23	53	42
	—	—	—
	100	100	100
	(N = 35)	(N = 58)	(N = 93)

In discussion, viewers in both groups remarked that the program was different in that there was an absence of violence and that the relationship between Joanne and Kevin was "affectionate" and "positive." They saw it as being "more serious in its intent" than exist-

ing programs, and some commented that the production was more "low-key," "slower," and "less flashy."

In comparison to other programs, the characters in *Up and Coming* did not seem one-dimensional. The groups acknowledged that Kevin, for instance, had more than one side to his character. The black audiences considered the program most similar to *White Shadow* and a "vast improvement" over *The Jeffersons*. The black audience also thought the program had attempted to present a more serious, realistic portrayal of black people. Unlike *The Jeffersons, Up and Coming* did not seem to portray blacks in comic roles, and it did not present black women as unattractive.

It was the general consensus of the black audience that the program succeeded in presenting a more positive portrayal of black people than usually occurs on television. In contrast, the general audience tended to be less vocal on the topic. They had greater difficulty in initiating and in making comparisons of the portrayals in this program with others.

7) Characterization

In general, respondents' answers to the multiple choice questions indicated that they felt the program had portrayed black people in a desirable way. The Wilsons were generally seen as being both a "typical" black family and a "typical" middle-class American family.

Analysis of the stereotyping data that had been collected using the PEAC equipment, suggested that there were instances where the audiences perceived negative stereotyping. It should be noted that the stereotyping measurements were recorded in a different way than the interest data. Stereotyping data were not cumulated, thus an instance of stereotyping was recorded only for that ten second interval in which the key was pressed.

As seen in Figure 7, there were approximately five segments in the program that a small proportion of viewers judged as negative stereotyping. These included points: 29-30, 36-37, 46, 61 and 106. All of these instances involve the character High Rise, particularly when he is clowning with Kevin. It is interesting to note, however, that High Rise is not perceived as behaving stereotypically when he informs Kevin of his decision about his college choice.

The stereotyping of High Rise was also pursued in discussion with the individual audiences. Those who thought High Rise was stereotyped remarked that he reinforced the negative image of the "happy-go-lucky, comical, and impulsive" young, black male. Many of the black viewers conceded that characters like High Rise do exist and that he would probably attract the attention of young viewers. Nonetheless, they tended to see little reason for exaggerating this character; many found his "over-use" of slang, his "bouncing," and "hand-slapping" particularly offensive. Some commented that they had warmed to High Rise as the story developed.

Kevin's mother and Joanne were the favorite characters of the black audience, as they appeared to portray "a strong positive image of responsible and assertive black women." Kevin and Joanne were the favorite character choice of the general audience (Table 28).

Table 28
Audience Choice of Most Interesting Character in *Up and Coming*

Character	Black Audience Percent	General Audience Percent
Kevin	16	27
Kevin's Mom	35	11
High Rise	16	9
Joanne	30	38
Recruiter	2	
None	0	14
	—	—
	100	100
	(N = 37)	(N = 56)

Three other points were made in discussion that relate to the characterization in *Up and Coming*. First of all, there was a consensus among the black viewers that there ought to be a male in the program who was less impulsive, less comical, and more responsible. The viewers saw a need for a stronger male image—one who was more in charge of his own life and less dependent on strong assertive women for emotional and intellectual support. In a similar vein, viewers generally thought that the father should have appeared in the program and conveyed his concern for Kevin and his problems. As it was, the father seemed "too busy" and the responsibility fell on the shoulders of the mother, reinforcing an image of matriarchy in the black family. Some remarked that a phone call from the father would have been sufficient to convey his interest in family affairs.

Although the black audience saw a need for a stronger male image, they felt the characters of Kevin and High Rise played an important role in the program. They thought Kevin and High Rise would capture and maintain the interest of young viewers. Adolescents would identify with them.

The viewers felt, however, that the foundations of the characters could be broadened. This introduces a second point that reoccurred in discussion.

Both the black audience and the general audience indicated that they thought the basis of the character portrayals could be expanded. What made High Rise and Kevin the characters they were? Why do they have the problems they do? What is the basis for their happy-go-lucky attitude? Do they behave this way to hide other feelings and to gain acceptance? In short, there was consensus that more program time should be devoted to establishing the reasons for characters' behaviors.

The black audience, in particular, commented that the program had not gone far enough in probing the complexities of the black psyche. Black viewers indicated they would like honest portrayals of blacks, coupled with a more incisive analysis of what it really means to be a black American.

A third issue, raised by the black audiences, concerned the emphasis in the program on athletics. Their general feeling was that the program should have included male characters with different career aspirations (e.g., chemical engineering) to illustrate the alternatives that exist for career choice.

8) Interest in Viewing

All audiences were asked if they would view the program in the future. Among black viewers, 65 percent said they would view it "often" and 35 percent said they would "sometimes" view it. Among general audience viewers, 44 percent said they would "never" view the program, 40 percent would "sometimes" view it, 10 percent would view "often," and 6 percent would not have the time.

Eighty-three percent of the black audience, contrasted with 18 percent of the general audience, said they would recommend to friends that they view the program.

When asked what day they would prefer to view the program, the largest proportions of both audiences (43 percent of the black audience and 30 percent of the general audience) indicated "any weekday."

d. Discussion and Conclusions

The intent of this discussion will be to synthesize the three sources of the data and to create from the diversity of individual findings a more holistic picture of how the black audience and the general audience perceive *Up and Coming*.

The program is well received by black audiences. They find it fairly interesting, relevant to their lives, and 100 percent of the group intend to view it. The black adolescent, to whom the program is most directly targeted, likes it most. A small proportion of the group perceive stereotyping in the antics and affectations of the character High Rise. Apart from this, stereotyping does not appear to be a problem but superficial characterization might be. The black audience suggests that the foundations of characters be broadened, the reasons for their behaviors more closely examined, and the black psyche probed more insightfully. They ask that the problem include a stronger role model for young black males and that the father be portrayed as more interested in his son's development. The messages are clearly read. They perceive it as a program about black families and the problems universal to adolescence. It seems to convey worthwhile lessons to young viewers.

In all, the black audience welcomes and applauds the intent of this program, that being to present a more honest and a more positive portrayal of the black American family than usually appears on television. They believe the program is the first step, albeit a large step, in the right direction. They want reassurance the efforts will continue beyond the pilot.

The response of the general audience, in comparison, is far more neutral. They find *Up and Coming* less interesting and less relevant. Half the audience indicate that, on some occasions, they will view it; the other half will not. The white adolescent, in comparison to the black adolescent, seems considerably less interested in the program. With regard to characterization, the general audience has fewer comments. They suggest, however, that characters should be more developed. The general audience also seems more divided in its perceptions of what messages the program conveys; they are less certain of its lessons. They are more inclined to see *Up and Coming* as a program about life's problems rather than a program about black families.

The most striking difference between the two audiences is their perceptions of *Up and Coming* as it compares with other programs on television. The general audience does not

share the strong feeling of the black audience that the program portrays black families more positively than they are usually portrayed on television. On the contrary, this audience sees *Up and Coming* as portraying black families in the same way. The general audience, it seemed, was simply less cognizant of the way in which blacks are usually portrayed and less able to articulate the differences between this portrayal and others. Very simply, it seemed that they had given the matter less thought.

The neutral response of the general audience to this program, as compared with the response of the black audience, might be explained in the following way. The black audience appears more interested in *Up and Coming* because it portrays a more positive, varied image of the black American family than usually appears on television; the audience is quick to recognize and endorse a program with this intent. The general audience, it seems, does not share this perception. For them, the program is a story of everyday events--"a slice of life." As a story, they judge it as fair to good. Thus, whereas the positive reception of the black audience seems to reflect their appreciation of the program's intent; the lukewarm reception of the general audience seems to reflect their judgment of the quality of the story.

Consider, for a moment, the structure of the story in the *Up and Coming* pilot. The first twelve minutes of the program are devoted to establishing the three major interdependent conflicts (Kevin's conflict of reconciling study and work, Kevin's conflict with Joanne, and High Rise's conflict with the recruiters). In the remaining half of the program, each conflict in turn intensifies and, in the last few minutes, each is resolved. According to the interest profiles, the first half of the program evokes neutral response; the remainder evokes slightly more interest. Few segments are distinguishable as climactic or boring. Judging from these profiles and viewers' comments, it may be that audiences expect or prefer more action at the onset. They may also expect that events will build toward more obvious points of tension. In other words, the structure of this program, may be quite different from what audiences have come to expect of television stories.

It may be possible to enhance the interest of the general audience in this program by altering the story structure, by introducing teasers or provocative segments at the onset, or by building in more suspense. Such changes in the story structure are not at odds with the interests expressed by the black audience. Thus, it seems that the interests of both groups could be accommodated without compromising either.

In summary, this evaluation has indicated that *Up and Coming* is well received by its target audience. Although the target group suggested specific changes regarding characterization, they nonetheless intend to view the programs. The response of the general audience was neutral in comparison. They expressed less interest in the pilot and less interest in viewing future programs. It was suggested that their lack of interest may reflect a desire for a more engaging story. By varying the story structure and by introducing more suspense, *Up and Coming* may find greater acceptance among the general audience.

Figure 5

PEAC Viewer Involvement Data on *Up and Coming* for Black and General Audiences

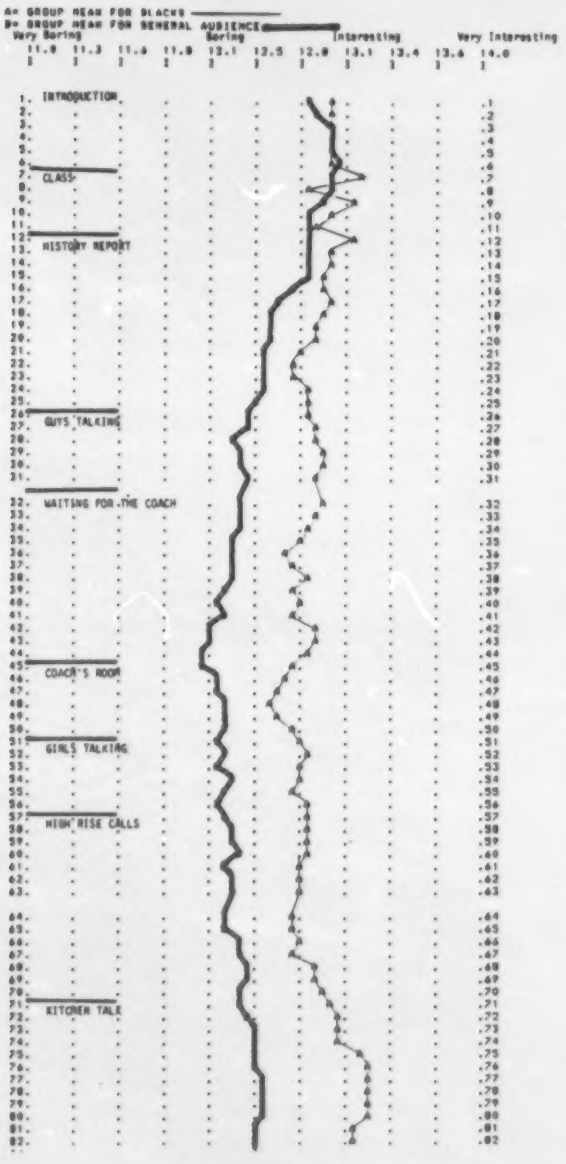


Figure 5 (cont.)

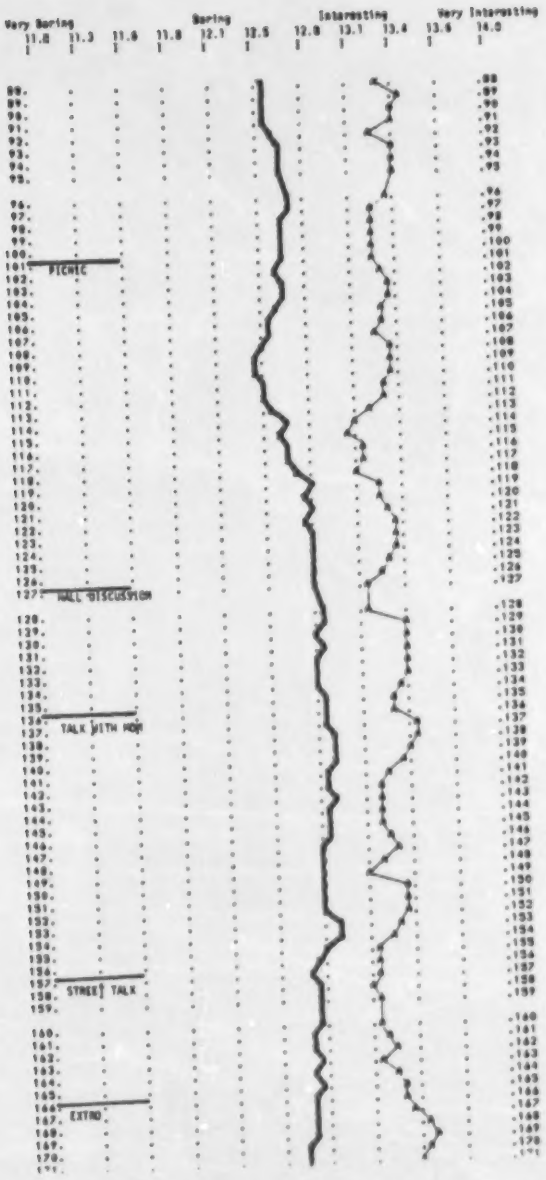


Figure 6
PEAC Viewer Involvement Data on
Up and Coming for Black and White Teen Viewers

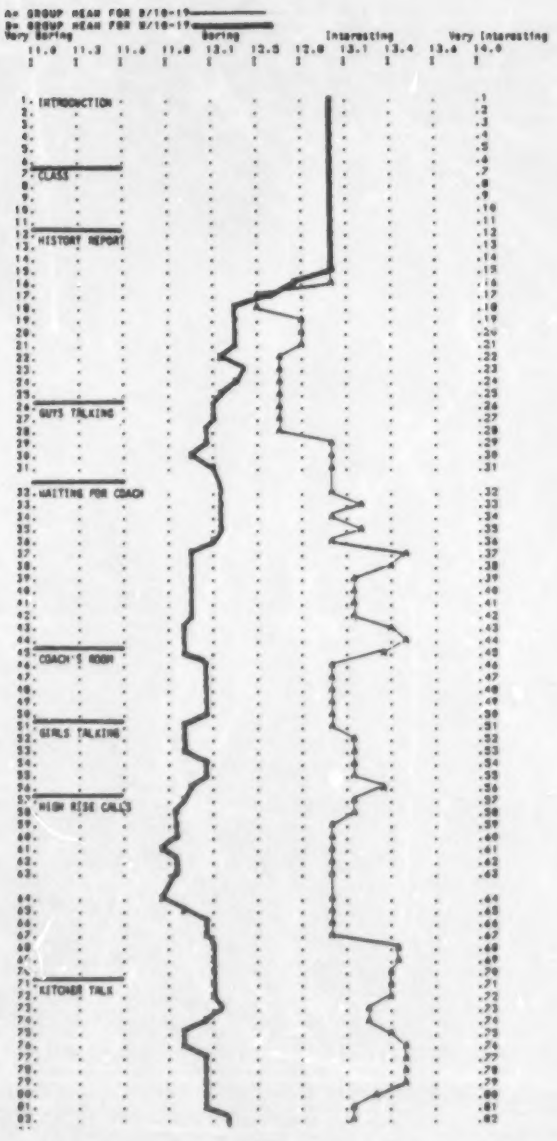


Figure 6 (cont.)

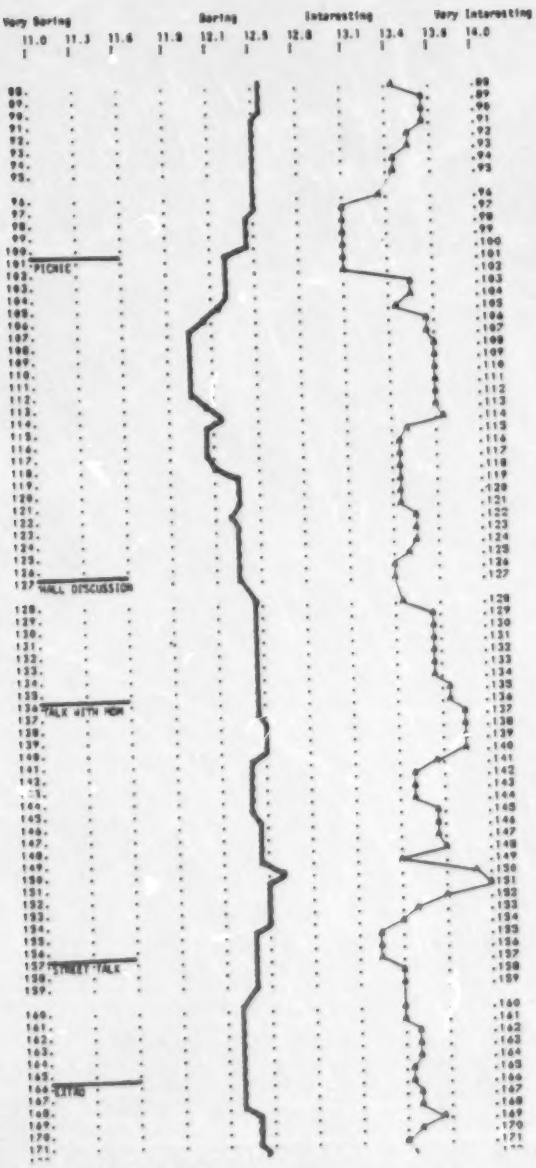


Figure 7

PEAC Monitoring of Stereotyping Incidents in *Up and Coming* for Target and General Audiences

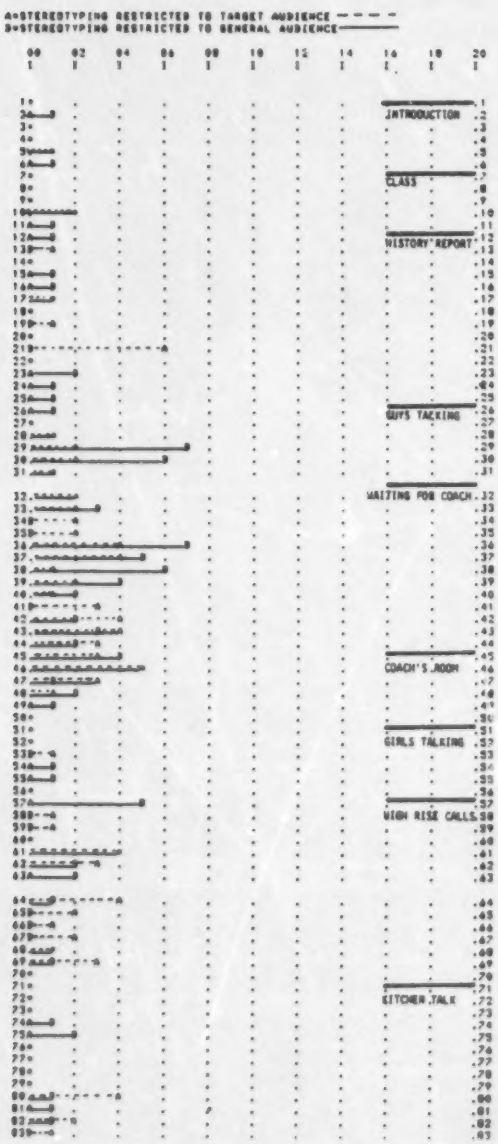
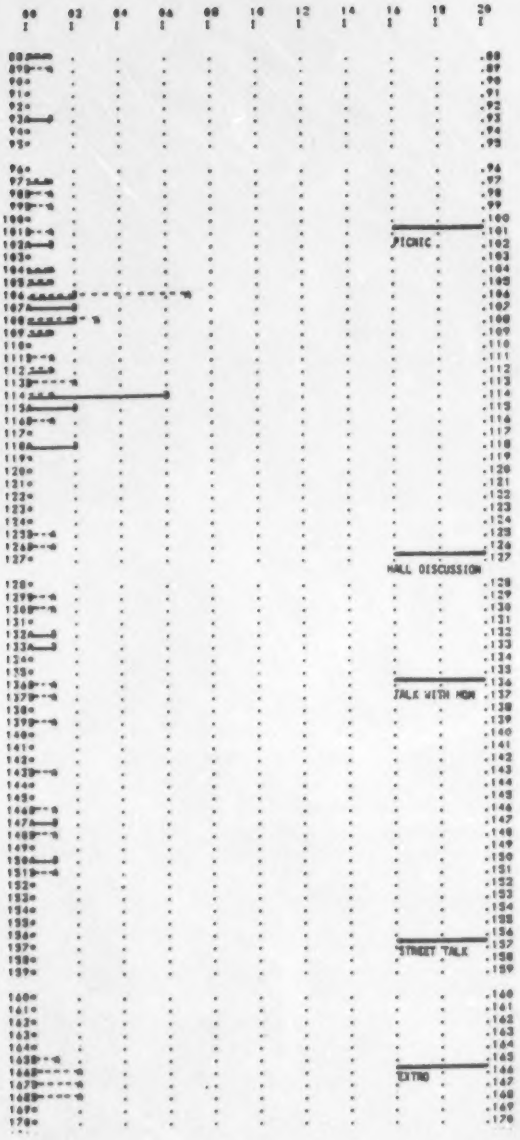


Figure 7 (cont.)



Annex D
Up and Coming
Questionnaire

1. Is the content of this program of personal relevance to you? Would you judge the program as being . . .

Very relevant	1
Relevant	2
Irrelevant	3
Very irrelevant	4

2. Which of the following do you perceive as being the strength of the program?

It alerts viewers to the kinds of problems adolescents encounter	1
It alerts viewers to the kinds of problems black families encounter	2
It demonstrates strategies for dealing with life problems	3
It demonstrates to parents and adolescents effective ways of communicating with one another	5
None of the above	6

3. Consider the acting, the story, and the characters. Overall, how would you rate the quality of the production?

Excellent	1
Good	2
Fair	3
Poor	4

4. If you were to compare this program with programs like: *White Shadow, Room 222, Good Times, The Jeffersons, Welcome Back Kotter, What's Happening,* and *Diff'rent Strokes,* would you say this program is . . .

Very similar	1
Similar	2
Different	3
Very different	4

5. If you were to compare this program with those just mentioned, would you say that *Up and Coming* portrays black people . . .

More negatively	1
More positively	2
In the same way	3

6. Does *Up and Coming* deal with real life situations? Would you say that such events are . . .

Very likely	1
Likely	2
Unlikely	3
Very unlikely	4

7. Was there any particular character who did not seem "real"?

None of them seemed real	1
All of them seemed real	2
Kevin	3
Kevin's mother	4
Joanne	5
High Rise	6

8. Which character did you find most interesting?

Kevin	1
Kevin's mother	2
High Rise	3
Joanne	4
The Recruiter	5
None	6

9. In your opinion, are the Wilsons a typical or atypical middle class, black family?

Very typical	1
Typical	2
Atypical	3
Very atypical	4

10. In your opinion, are the Wilsons a typical or atypical middle class, American family?

Very typical	1
Typical	2
Atypical	3
Very atypical	4

11. In general, did you feel that the program presented a desirable or undesirable image of black people?

A very desirable image	1
A desirable image	2
An undesirable image	3
A very undesirable image	4

12. Was there any character in particular who you felt portrayed an *undesirable* image of black people?

All of them	1
None of them	2
Kevin	3
Kevin's mother	4
Joanne	5
High Rise	6
The Recruiter	7

13. Did this program have a message?

Yes, it had a message	1
No, it was just for entertainment	2

14. In your opinion, what was the main message that the program attempted to convey?

You should prepare for your career early in life	1
Adolescents are often torn between social life and hard work	2
Academic success opens many doors for the future	3
Women usually take life more seriously than men	4
You should strive for the best in life and never settle for less	5
No message	6

15. Would you recommend to others that they watch this program?

Yes	1
No	2

16. How often would you view the program?

As often as possible	1
Sometimes	2
Never	3
I would not have the time	4

17. Which day would you *most* likely view the program?

Any weekday	1
Monday	2
Tuesday	3
Wednesday	4
Thursday	5
Friday	6
Saturday	7
Sunday	8
I would not view it at all	9

18. Sex:

Male	1
Female	2

19. Age:

14 - 19	1
20 - 24	2
25 - 34	3
35 - 49	4
50 - 54	5
55 and over	6

20. Are you a parent?

Yes	1
No	2

21. What is the last level of education that you've completed?

Grade School	1
Some High School	2
Completed High School	3
Commercial/Technical	4
Some University	5
Completed University	6

Appendix B

Age of Respondents in the Black and General Audience

Age	Black Audience Percent	General Audience Percent	Total Percent
Under 14	0	2	1
14-19	27	36	32
20-24	11	14	13
25-34	19	16	17
35-49	11	16	17
50-54	19	2	9
55 and over	14	14	14
	100 (N=37)	100 (N=50)	100 (N=87)

Appendix C

Education of Respondents in the Black and General Audience

Education	Black Audience Percent	General Audience Percent	Total Percent
Grade School	19	0	8
Some High School	22	4	11
Completed High School	11	76	48
Community College/Technical School	0	2	1
Some University	27	6	15
Completed University	22	12	16
	100 (N=30)	100 (N=50)	100 (N=87)

C. Traditional Focus Groups*

1. *Winslow House* This section describes a research project on *Winslow House* among 103 viewers in Washington, D. C. and Seattle, Washington. Ten focus panels were conducted, five in each of the two cities. These focus groups lasted approximately two hours each and investigated participants' attitudes and opinions about the program, its production, and the concepts it explored. The research took place between July 14 and 17, 1980, and the characteristics of the participants were as follows:

PANEL	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	LOCATION	AGE GROUP	MALE/FEMALE
1	12	Wash., D.C.	55-70	6/6
2	10	Wash., D.C.	18-30	4/6
3	8	Wash., D.C.	31-45	4/4
4	11	Wash., D.C.	46-54	5/6
5	11	Wash., D.C.	55-70	6/5
6	12	Seattle	18-30	8/4
7	10	Seattle	46-54	5/5
8	9	Seattle	55-70	5/4
9	10	Seattle	55-70	6/4
10	10	Seattle	31-45	7/3

The sessions began with an introduction by the moderator and warm-up questions about television viewing habits. Each panel then viewed the pilot and answered written questionnaires about it. These questionnaires were intended to obtain initial reactions and comments from each participant, unbiased by any opinions of other viewers. Then, there followed a one-to-one and a half-hour group discussion about the program. This discussion period explored all the attitudes and opinions of the participants and developed their recommendations for changes and improvements to the show.

a. Quantitative Data

Each participant completed a questionnaire immediately after watching the pilot. The findings from these questionnaires are presented in seven tables in this section.

It should be noted that the participants' initial comments generally were more favorable than their final rating of the program or their group discussion comments. Many viewers of this pilot spoke more freely about their negative feelings once they heard the other participants speak up.

At the end of each discussion group, participants were asked to rate the program again in order to compare their attitudes. After they had the opportunity to talk about the pro-

*Excerpts from a report prepared by The Prism Corporation, Washington, D. C.

gram in a group setting, participants rated the show more negatively. On a scale of one to ten ("one" as the lowest rating and "ten" as the highest), the results were:

	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Wash., D.C.	0	0	1	1	4	9	5	11	10	10
Seattle	1	2	8	3	3	7	4	9	7	5
Total	1	2	9	4	7	16	9	20	17	15

This summary chart should be compared with those that follow in this section and represent a first impression rating. All figures are based on the number of people responding to the particular question. Not all participants responded to every question.

Table 29
Hours of Television Watched Each Week
by *Winslow House* Focus
Group Members

	COMMERCIAL HOURS					
GROUP	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-30
18-30	7	3	2	2	2	2
31-45	5	3	3	2	2	4
46-54	4	3	5	2	2	4
55-70	9	10	8	1	8	4
Total	25	19	18	7	14	14

	NONCOMMERCIAL HOURS					
	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-30
18-30	7	3	2	1	2	0
31-34	7	5	3	1	1	1
46-54	8	5	3	0	1	1
55-70	15	7	4	3	1	4
Total	37	20	12	5	5	6
Wash., D.C.	25	12	5	3	0	2
Seattle	12	8	7	2	5	4
Total	37	20	12	5	5	6

Table 30

General Rating of *Winslow House* by Focus Group

GROUP	EXCELLENT			GOOD		FAIR		POOR		
	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
18-30	0	0	1	4	2	2	3	4	2	1
31-45	0	1	1	1	2	4	6	2	1	2
46-54	1	0	1	3	3	4	4	4	1	0
55-70	0	3	2	9	3	7	8	7	1	1
Total	1	4	15	17	10	17	21	17	5	4
Wash., D.C.	0	1	2	7	7	10	12	10	1	1
Seattle	1	3	3	10	3	7	9	7	4	3
Total	1	4	5	17	10	17	21	17	5	4

Table 31

Focus Group Interest in *Winslow House* Subject Matter

GROUP	VERY INTERESTED			MODERATELY INTERESTED				NOT INTERESTED		
	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
18-30	0	1	0	4	6	3	2	3	0	0
31-45	1	1	1	1	2	4	3	3	1	3
46-54	1	0	4	3	1	1	4	5	2	0
55-70	1	1	8	3	4	3	11	6	2	3
Total	3	3	13	11	13	11	20	17	5	6
Wash., D.C.	2	1	5	5	6	8	11	9	2	3
Seattle	1	2	8	6	7	3	9	8	3	3
Total	3	3	13	11	13	11	20	17	5	6

Table 32

Focus Group Assessment of
Production Quality of *Winslow House*

GROUP	EXCELLENT			GOOD		FAIR		POOR		
	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
18-30	0	1	2	3	2	5	4	2	1	0
31-45	3	1	0	3	3	3	4	2	0	0
46-54	2	0	2	4	2	3	6	1	1	0
55-70	6	3	9	5	4	7	3	4	0	1
Total	11	5	13	15	11	18	17	9	2	1
Wash., D.C.	6	4	4	6	8	11	6	5	1	1
Seattle	5	1	9	9	3	7	11	4	1	0
Total	11	5	13	15	11	18	17	9	2	1

Table 33
Focus Group Evaluation of
Actors' Performance in *Winslow House*

GROUP	EXCELLENT			GOOD		FAIR		POOR		
	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
18-30	1	0	2	6	2	4	4	0	1	0
31-45	3	0	0	4	7	2	2	1	1	0
46-54	2	0	0	7	2	5	3	2	0	0
55-70	5	2	10	11	2	6	6	0	0	0
Total	11	2	12	28	13	17	15	3	2	0
Wash., D.C.	6	2	5	12	7	10	8	2	0	0
Seattle	5	0	7	16	6	7	7	1	2	0
Total	11	2	12	28	13	17	15	3	2	0

Table 34
Focus Group Evaluation of
Plot and Storyline in *Winslow House*

GROUP	EXCELLENT			GOOD		FAIR		POOR		
	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
18-30	0	0	2	4	1	5	1	1	4	1
31-45	0	0	1	1	0	6	6	3	1	1
46-54	1	1	0	3	1	4	5	4	1	1
55-70	2	0	5	8	4	7	4	8	2	1
Total	3	1	8	16	6	22	16	16	8	4
Wash., D.C.	0	0	3	7	4	13	10	9	3	3
Seattle	3	1	5	9	2	9	6	7	5	1
Total	3	1	8	16	6	22	16	16	8	4

Table 35
Additional Focus Group
Responses to *Winslow House*

	YES	NO
Would you recommend this show to others?	35	62
I found this show to be:		
- Informative/Educational	30	68
- Similar to other television programming	56	44
- Imaginative/Creative	37	60
- Boring	52	43
- Relevant to my life	19	76
- Enjoyable viewing	41	58

My favorite character was:	NUMBER OF VOTES
- Elizabeth O'Brien	1
- Lucy Ann Johnson	3
- Millie Coolidge	15
- Jim Weber	17
- Emma Silver	15
- Jake Silver	16
- Mike Green	5
- Paul Silver	2
- Mary Duffy	5

b. Qualitative Findings

Initial reactions to *Winslow House* were varied but the majority of comments were negative. Participants said the plot was slow, lifeless, disjointed, and confusing. Most thought the writing was poor and the characters were outdated or stereotypes. The majority did not appreciate being "left hanging" at the end of each vignette, nor the failure of the episode to resolve any of the conflicts that were introduced. They commented on the lack of subtlety in presenting issues and character types. ("They hit you over the head.")

The majority of participants found the program unrealistic, although for many different reasons. A significant number of participants were offended by the obscene language used by Mr. Green (primarily because it was inappropriate in the show, rather than patently offensive), and by the excessive ethnicity of Emma and Jake Silver. (The characterization was so stereotyped that it made many people uncomfortable, especially Jewish viewers.)

Many participants felt that the issues were worth exploring - if not in a series, then in a documentary - but they did not respond favorably to this particular dramatization. Many commented that they would not expect to find this show on public television because they expected only high quality productions to be sponsored by public TV. Most thought it

would be the product of a commercial network if it were shown at all. They did not think it would last a season in its present form.

Although differences in age did not affect the majority opinions, there were more elderly people who liked the program than young people. The older the viewer the more likely he or she was to react favorably. Sixty to 70 year olds accepted the program far more readily than those 50-60 because it seemed the latter group did not want to be categorized with the elderly characters in the show. They often commented that they were still active, working people that had no generation gap problems and therefore didn't personally relate to the program.

Some young viewers said that they didn't like the show personally but thought elderly people might appreciate it. Many groups struggled to identify a target population to whom the program might appeal but usually excluded themselves.

Seattle viewers, especially the elderly, were more favorably disposed towards the show than the Washington, D.C. viewers. The moderators felt that generally the Seattle participants were a less sophisticated group than those in Washington, D.C. Sophistication differences were reflected in educational backgrounds, professions, communicative ability, and overall insights.

This section on qualitative findings categorizes the various areas on which participants commented. It presents a short summary of the prevailing attitudes followed by selected representative comments to illustrate the points of view. Where differences of opinion are affected by age or location of panels those factors are noted.

1) The Story and Plot

When asked immediately after the program, "What did you think about it?", most participants commented on the lack of continuity in the story and plot presented. They felt there were too many subplots which had the effect of producing a disjointed and confusing storyline.

> "There was too much going on at one time. I didn't know whether it was aiming to be a situation comedy or a social commentary. I feel the thing that was supposed to grab your interest was this mysterious person who was harassing these people. There were jokes but a lot of struggles were portrayed. It was such a confusion of ideas."

> "The idea of having a situation program—I'm not going to call it comedy—of older people is an excellent idea, however, I thought the plot was as thin as it could be and rather disjointed. Aiming for an older audience, they should create characters and situations more attuned to real people. It seemed artificial and disjointed. I was disappointed with the 30 minutes."

> "There were some good actors in this show. I recognized some actors from other things, but it was very poorly put together. I wouldn't watch it. The shifting from one scene to another didn't complete anything at all."

"Granted, this was a pilot, but they were trying to develop too much in too short a time for the story line. It should have been cut down to a few characters. The British take great time in developing a character. I had no sense of the conviction of the actors. They gave me the impression of 'take the money and run.' "

"You take *One Day at a Time,* each program gives a message. This program ended and you were only left with what's going to happen next week. There was no satisfaction with what happened now."

"I thought it was pretty confusing for a pilot. I knew it was an attempt to introduce a lot of characters and start some threads going, but for a pilot it really didn't start anywhere. It just threw you into this house, with all these disjointed things going on."

Many participants equated the program to a soap opera in its efforts to introduce so many people with different problems. They felt the episode left everything unresolved.

"They introduced a lot of things, then left you hanging. I don't know if that was the purpose of the show--to get your interest to watch it, but I'm not one to watch a show like a soap opera."

"I felt like saying, 'Get to the point.' It dealt with too many crisis situations. I didn't really care for it."

The show lacked vitality, according to many viewers. It was slow, boring in parts, and failed to involve the viewers emotionally in the story.

"It needed humor to hold your interest. My mind was wandering."

"It was shallow."

"I wouldn't watch it . . . it was boring . . . "

"They showed all these people in the boarding house; they didn't show enough human warmth by focusing on one relationship. There were little bits and pieces; I think this is a hopeless show."

"It dealt with good subject matter but the way it was presented was boring. It needed more spark."

"I like something with more 'zip.' "

"I was wishing a commercial would come."

Many participants found parts of the show confusing. The most significant point of confusion was why Jake Silver took the food out of the refrigerator. This question came up in almost every panel and explanations were varied.

"He didn't like it so he wanted to get rid of it."

"He wanted liver; he was sneaking it out for himself."

"I felt Mr. Silver wanted an excuse to eat something else."

"I must've blinked my eyes. I thought he was going to give it to his son."

"I thought he took it so no one else would take it."

"I missed that whole thing."

"Basically he was trying to get rid of it."

"He was sure he wouldn't get any so he was giving it away."

Considering the food parcel was central to the plot, it is important that so many people misunderstood Jake Silver's intentions. Other areas of confusion were: why the Winslow House was called a boarding house when every tenant had a separate apartment with a kitchen, why a young person (Jim Weber) would be living in the house, and why all the furniture was so fancy and expensive-looking when these people were so concerned about food and lack of money. ("It looked like the White House instead of a boarding house.") Many viewers were confused overall by the point of the show: whether it was meant to be a comedy, a drama, lighthearted, educational or a high school training program for classroom discussion. Some illustrative comments:

"It was confusing . . . you get a feeling from the people: why are they there? What are they doing? What does this all mean? Where do they all fit in? The way it's presently presented, I don't get a sense of that. I don't get a sense of the insights behind these issues, the conflicts and how they're going to be resolved; how they're going to approach it. I don't think any of this is treated."

"It was misleading, I thought it was a boarding house, but everyone ate separately. It was really an apartment house. And in an apartment house they wouldn't have that much contact with each other."

"To be a successful TV program it needed either more of the dramatic or more comedy. It didn't seem to fall anywhere."

"They should have had another younger person. I couldn't understand why the young guy was living there. It was just to add to the plot."

"I think *Winslow House* could only be made in Hollywood. It just doesn't ring true to me. I don't think there's a boarding house like this in our society. It needs more balance and development of the plot. It lacks cohesiveness."

"I was asking: if it is comedy, where are the jokes?"

"I thought they were trying to show the generation gap."

"Do you find much comedy in soaps? . . . But is this supposed to be a soap? I'm not even sure what this is supposed to be. Is it a soap, or a family program or comedy? I thought it was a soap."

"I thought they showed how some elderly people like the young folks, while it also showed elderly who dislike the young folks."

"I don't feel like I care about the people and I don't want to see what happens to them. It wasn't fiction or fowl. It's not a soap opera kind of show, although it's worded like a soap opera."

"I want to question what objective the producer has in mind. What is it they're trying to do? Is it just a show that will fill time slot for three months this autumn or are they trying to focus on the problems of the elderly? Is this a social commentary or are they trying to create a whole new area of situation comedy? Are they serious about this?"

"It's a high school morality play. Like one written by the 'Gray Panthers,' or the 'A.C.L.U.,' or the 'Anti-Defamation League.' It was cardboard and one dimensional. I would have walked out before the first commercial."

2) The Subject Matter

Opinion was split as to whether the issues and general subject matter of *Winslow House* were of interest. Many participants said they thought a program dealing with the problems of the elderly was worthwhile but they didn't like this particular program. Often these same participants did not have a personal interest in the topics but assumed other people would.

Other participants did not think the subject matter was worthwhile or would make a successful television program. They did not think the program would have a constituency at all. Older people would not want to face the grim realities of aging in such a show and younger people would not relate to it at all. The general consensus of opinion was, however, that the concept could make it--as almost any subject matter can--as long as it is well done.

One panelist remarked that years ago no one would have expected that a program about a surgical team in the field during the Korean War would make a hit family show, yet *M*A*S*H* has been one of the highest rated series for years. This is because it is so well written, acted and produced. Accordingly, many participants admitted that they were neutral or disinterested in the issues mainly because they were so "turned off" by this particular dramatization. Comments on the subject matter by panelists aged 55-70 included:

"Older people are always depicted in rather strange, idiotic ways in our media today. I think you could have a very entertaining program with older people without making them look

like a bunch of junior idiots. It gives younger people the wrong impression and older people will be turned off by it."

"After watching this for a while I would have gone on to something else. This is not my thing. I get enough of real life anyway."

"It's an insult to my intelligence. Why don't they present shows with good literature that we could be interested in if they're trying to appeal to an older audience."

"We may be senior citizens, but I don't want to have anything to do with that kind of life."

"I don't think people who have similar problems to these characters would be interested in this program. They'd want humor or entertainment to get away from reality."

"How much do old people have in common? . . . Why should all old people be interested in the same show? They're as diversified as the younger people."

"I would never watch a show like this on the aging. I found it too discriminating. What are you going to do next? Why should they set the elderly apart and make a series out of it?"

"I don't want to be lumped in with a bunch of people like that. I don't want to be set aside in a class."

Comments on the subject matter by panelists aged 30-55 were:

"I think (the subject matter) would be interesting if they do more work with it. Develop the characters more."

"I really get tired of watching TV with no one over 25. You wonder what happens to the older people. I wonder what TV is aimed for. Older people are either hidden or pathetic."

"I thought the issue of the plight many of the elderly face is very important. I just don't think they treated it well in this."

"The lady who didn't have the money for food made me wonder: Will I have enough when I retire? That's an important issue."

"The most refreshing thing about it is that it brings older people into focus. It makes you aware that they're part of the human race and that we'll all be there soon."

"I thought there were heavy, heavy themes and very strong social comments they were trying to make, but they were doing it in a very preaching way and not getting down to basics."

"I don't like to see old people ineffectual in their life patterns. This show made me sad, no one was happy, they didn't know how to handle their relationships."

A few young panelists (ages 18-30) expressed an interest in the subject matter of the show because they were personally concerned about issues facing the elderly. Although as a group they reacted more negatively towards this particular program, they felt older people might want to watch a show on the same issues. Some of their comments:

"It could have been interesting if it was presented better. It should have spent less time on the Jewish stuff. I couldn't relate to them."

"This show went a little deeper than some shows dealing with people and that's important."

"I felt guilty that I might not have a true interest in old people. It tells me about old people's concerns, but I don't think I would watch it myself. But I know a lot of people who are concerned with the problems of the aging."

"I think it was a lighthearted way of touching on some very serious issues. I did feel it jumped around, but in time you would pick up on it. It's not the type of program you can watch tonight and not watch tomorrow. In a sense it is soap opera-ish, but I thought it was good."

"I don't identify with this show much. The people are much older than us."

"I think it was a pretty interesting show as I have a personal interest in aging. The topics they talked about were good. I think there's a lot of interest in that now. I think a lot of young people are concerned."

"Sometimes it really takes a while to learn to like certain programs, but after watching for a while you can really learn to appreciate some shows. Generally speaking, I think that the older people would appreciate this program more."

"I didn't think the story lacked for possibilities, but there was an obvious lack of attention flow."

When participants were asked how other television programs touched on issues facing the elderly, about half said that this show was not different from other commercial programs in its portrayals. Programs were mentioned in which participants remembered issues or characters similar to *Winslow House: Fish, The Waltons, Molly Goldberg, Maude, Soap, I Love Lucy,* and *Mary Hartman.* Many participants thought *Winslow House* unusual in that almost all of its characters were elderly. However, they felt it presented a generally negative and stereotyped image of older people in the same way that other television programming does.

3) Characterizations

The overall impression developed from the comments of 103 people was that viewers felt most of the characters in *Winslow House* were stereotypes who were not believable as every day people. The characters were undeveloped, "stagey," overly ethnic, and heavy-handed. Comments were similar across age groups:

> "I thought they hit you over the head with everything, especially in building up the character of the Jewish couple. I think if they wanted to accurately portray Jewish people they should have had Jewish actors. The trite mannerisms they kept repeating and repeating . . . "
>
> "Historically, I don't think there's any survival for ethnic type programs. What they did in this show is no different from what they did in *Molly Goldberg* in the 40's. They haven't grown at all."
>
> "There's no energy between the characters and they really don't relate in a very realistic sense. They're relating more like actors and actresses and I started getting tired of that."
>
> "They took mannerisms and exaggerated them and they kept coming back at you with one after the other and it wasn't an accurate personality."
>
> "They gave you a whole range of people, yeah, they were all stereotypes but that can be reality too . . . at least they showed a broad spectrum . . . there are a lot of stereotypical type people."
>
> "I thought throughout the first half things were very wooden and it was hard to get past the stereotypes: the Jewish characters, the young kid--there was too much. By the time we got around to Mrs. Coolidge, I liked her. I liked the way they wrote her in . . . "
>
> "I felt there were too many old people in the show--everyone was old except the lawyer. You can watch it a few times then it's going to lose its appeal. I hate endings like that. I'd never watch it again."
>
> "I think the whole characterization was lousy. I probably wouldn't recommend it to anyone. I don't think it's realistic even when you get to old ages."
>
> "I think (Mr. Green's) character is a throw-back to 10 years ago when there had to be a definite generation gap." A response: "He's like all the old people I know." (Comments by 18-30 group)
>
> "They all seemed to have reasonably active lives."

"I liked the law student because he seemed like the voice of reason. This guy is able to see when things fit into place and it seems like he'll be able to pull the things together."

"I did not like the *clichés* presented in this program: this man (Mr. Green) refuses to believe that this (law student's girlfriend) goes on, that you're a hooker or a hippie. I wouldn't want my kids watching some judgment like that because that's bad."

"Almost every character in this pilot was a Hollywood stereotyped person that really didn't say much very meaningful. They had a terrible script and plot to work with."

"Mrs. Coolidge was the best actress . . . I see that strain of pride coming out all the time."

"I thought the young man was real good."

"There appeared to be a lot of stereotyping and putting on of paranoias that old people already feel. It kind of left me cold. I wouldn't turn it on."

"I thought the characterization was too heavy-handed. They're trying to jam into one person all the catchy Jewish phrases."

"I'd like to see this carried out to a conclusion. I want to see realism. I think they wanted you to think. I liked the blind women; it should be developed more."

"The characters are stereotyped from 20-30 years ago."

"Don't we think we're getting a lot of this on TV? The young people are all-wise and all-seeing and the older people our age are so narrow minded and bigoted and that's not true. But we're getting so much of this on these shows. The young man was supposed to know so much more."

"The do-gooder would be interesting to develop. Also, Mrs. Coolidge, what she was before and why she was the way she is now, would be interesting."

"There was something very vague about the whole thing. You never got involved with anybody. They didn't have any particular outstanding feature."

4) Production Quality

Participants were asked to comment on the writing, camera work, sets, casting, acting and title of *Winslow House*. Most emphatic comments were directed at the writing. They felt it was poor.

"The lines didn't even seem real."

"At home I would have watched the first show. I usually watch shows that are new. But I'd probably read a book through this because it wasn't written well. When the guys grabbed her at the end it was like an afterthought of: what should we do now to get them to watch next week?"

"I thought the writing was terrible . . . there wasn't any spark in the dialogue."

"I found some stuff funny that shouldn't have been. First, when the lady came downstairs and spilled her laundry, it was so overdone I thought it was funny. Another time, a person is already sitting down and Jake Silver says "sit down." I guess that was supposed to be a little funny. Another time the mistress or the maid (Lucy Ann Johnson) kinda refuses the man (Jake) something he asks of her. He thanks her for declining him and it was totally inappropriate."

"When she (Elizabeth) fell down the stairs, there was no empathy, it was funny." A response: "But don't you think it was intentional? Someone would come pick her up like the guy did." A second response: "I had no idea what was going on. An introduction like that makes you feel it's going to be light-hearted and a comedy. It still made you feel like a soap opera was coming."

"I don't think it was intentional, but the show was unsympathetic to the elderly and sympathetic to the young."

"Technically, the dialogue needs to be tightened. There was so much excess dialogue."

"Very poor, undistinguished writing."

Many participants indicated that they found certain things offensive. The obscene language used by Mr. Green, the antagonism between Green and the young people, and the overdone ethnicity of the Jewish couple were all mentioned.

". . . when the lady was called a hooker and there was no character reference to it."

"I found one very offensive remark. To the black woman, the Jewish man was saying something about handouts to her. I found it a very racially offensive remark."

". . . the profanity the old man used to the young repairman."

". . . the extreme ethnic part."

"I found the whole tension between the age groups distasteful. The older man was very defensive about his age, the younger

folks, very belligerent and disinterested. It seemed very artificial."

"I wouldn't want my grandchildren to see it with the profanity."

". . . The typical Jewish humor. We've seen too much of that."

". . . The activist - she was trying to help but didn't know what she was doing."

Many people mentioned that the camera work was bad or that the camera seemed restricted to a limited area. They didn't like the close-up shots that zoomed in at the end of a segment.

"The camera work was bad. When the phone rang the camera lingered there five or six seconds. We all know what a phone looks like."

"The camera rarely moved, no juxtaposition. The whole thing looked cheaply put together."

"The camera didn't choose the right perspective."

"The mike can be seen in some of the shots."

"The real shortcoming was the writing but some of the close-up shots I thought were too close. The food at the table was too close. You were looking down his mouth."

Most people thought the sets were too elaborate or fancy to be realistic for the particular story. ("They showed no signs of wear.") A number of participants mentioned the fact that there appeared to be a wall directly outside the window that would make it impossible to throw a stone through the glass.

They felt the casting was appropriate except several mentioned Jake Silver was too pathetic and pained-looking all the time. They said the law student was too scrawny and young.

Opinions on the acting were split. Many thought the acting was good, considering the material the actors had to work with, but others thought it was bad. Several mentioned the absence of any New England or Boston accents.

"Everything was such a *cliché*. It was an embarrassment to see such top-notch actors and actresses going beneath themselves in this low grade show. Maybe they needed the money."

"She (Millie Coolidge) was the only one that I thought acted well. She had a touch of something. I was willing to go along with her. But the script was so badly written and so infantile. I've seen more life and flair in high school plays than this pilot."

"I liked the acting. I thought they were all good."

"Mr. Silver looked like a young man trying to play an old man."

"The old lady (Mrs. Coolidge) was a good actress; Weber, even the bigot - I didn't like his role but that can't take away his acting ability."

Some participants found the title of the show misleading. They thought it sounded British and not ethnic Jewish like the predominant characters.

5) Propensity to Watch

The majority of viewers said they would not watch the show although some said they would watch it if nothing else was on at the time.

"Everything I watch, I expect to learn something from it whether it's good or bad. I don't think I'd learn anything from that. It didn't even hold my attention."

"I'd watch it if I was home doing something else and wanted to listen to TV in the background and nothing else was on."

"Older people and the bored will watch it. Older people can identify with the characters better. Weber is the only person that the younger people could identify with."

When asked what audience this show might attract, viewers usually mentioned some group other than themselves, if any group at all.

"What I wondered at the end was what audience was this directed to? It sprays the whole spectrum."

'Maybe my mother would like it."

"I really have no idea. What would they sell on it? Geritol?"

"I couldn't imagine my 18- and 20-year-old watching this show."

"The show could be reworked and I might watch it. It's not a story for our teenager."

Most people expected to see *Winslow House* on commercial TV. When asked whether it might appear on public television, some comments were:

"Never on public TV. (The show) doesn't have the finesse. Public TV is locked in with the BBC, thank God."

"I don't think public TV would buy it because the quality of drama on public TV is far better than commercial TV."

"I kept waiting for canned laughter or commercials to ease the pain."

"This program is not suitable for public TV. It doesn't have enough depth."

"It doesn't fit what they (public TV) are trying to do - educate or dramatize good literature."

"It's not high quality enough for public TV."

Participants recommended a wide variety of times of the day and days of the week to schedule the show, depending on their opinion of it. "Six a.m. Sunday morning" and "2 a.m." were at one extreme and "Sunday evening" or "Wednesday evening, when people aren't too particular about what they watch" were other examples. No clear majority recommendation for a time slot emerged from the panels.

c. Conclusions and Recommendations

At the end of each panel, participants were invited to offer concluding comments to the producer of *Winslow House* and to recommend changes. There were a number of spontaneous reactions such as "Can it," "Scrap it," "Start over," and "Go back to the scratch pad." But generally participants agreed that the concept had merit as long as the show could be redone. Some concluding remarks were:

"They will have to start out the show with more of a bang or it will get canned in two weeks."

"If this is an attempt to portray real people, it needs a lot more realism."

"There were three spots in the show where you actually thought there were classic personalities that could be humorous. There were some dead spots, too. If it weren't so stagey . . . it has some possibilities."

"If they developed more humor . . . old people have such a great sense of humor. Develop a story on each one."

"I'm not sure if we are ready for elderly people to be funny on TV shows."

"If it was meant to have an impact (on the viewers), it would have to be presented differently."

"If I were in my 60s or 70s I would resent this show very much."

"I think the show has a lot of promise, but myself, I was very disappointed - partly because the people, they were doing a fairly good acting job, but you could tell they were acting. I started to look at how well they were acting, rather than the program. I didn't think the writing was very distinguished, it was very poor. You could have substituted any five minutes with anything else and it wouldn't have made any difference."

"I don't see what it's trying to prove."

Based on this research, it appears that only a small minority of people would watch and enjoy *Winslow House* as it is presently written and staged. There were too many areas that viewers disliked. Numerous constructive suggestions were made that participants felt would improve the program. The primary topic areas were:

1. *the writing*--improve the quality, tighten it up, pick up the pace of the show, add humor, relate past and present topics of interest.
2. *the characters*--develop more fully, improve their interaction, explore their backgrounds.
3. *the plot*--focus on one or two stories, do not attempt to include all the characters in one episode, have the characters eat together as in a real boarding house--this would provide a setting for realistic interaction.

Sample verbatim recommendations were:

> "I think he (the producer) has a good idea but he has to rework it. If he put more comedy in it I think it would sell, also, it has to move faster, with more action. It needs a lot more class."
>
> "Decide what you're trying to achieve. If you're trying to show hard hitting social commentary, then do that and let the comedy fall as it may. If you're trying for the comedy, then do that. Everything was so predictable."
>
> "There must be some humor in a show of this type--I suggest that they save the scratch pad for Norman Lear."
>
> "It should have some nostalgia. Dig up some things we (elderly) know about that were funny."
>
> "He must have supporting social detail. This had none."
>
> "Maybe if they had people of the older age group writing the show, maybe it would be more realistic. It's like young people thinking for older people. I don't believe people more matured would write this way."
>
> "Do some shooting on location, not all in the house. I feel it's all going to be in the house. More than just that inside setting. You seem cheated. It doesn't seem real."
>
> "The show should take its own advice and get out of that house, they've got all the characters stacked up in the house. You need to take some of the characters out of the house and then they can bring their troubles back into the house and then get the people involved. Then you have more of a range."
>
> "They should develop one idea in each episode instead of putting all the characters in one."
>
> "Concentrate on one person each time. There was too much going on. You didn't focus on anything."

"The subject matter is good, make it more interesting, pep it up, develop the character."

"I wouldn't tell him (the producer) to throw it away. I think he's made five or six whopping mistakes, but you've got to do that. I think he's got more than some of the popular shows on TV, even after you cut out all the garbage."

"If you were going into a drama type of thing with a message, then as a one shot deal that would be fine, but if you're going into a series, that's not going to hold you. You've got to have more than that. Being old can be very depressing, but there's a lot of humor in being old and that has to come out."

"Maybe each of these programs should be based on single issues. Maybe no more than two issues so that they could be entertaining and well developed and make their point, not have a smorgasbord of characters."

"*FISH*, this program was taken off last year. It was an elderly couple dealing with younger kids and I thought that was real good and the interactions were good. But here you jump from one apartment to another; but I think the format of *FISH* is one that should be followed where they zoom in on one family situation and then they could introduce the other characters later."

"They could make the pilot longer if they have to introduce so many people at once."

Viewers recognized the lack of any realistic social commentary on television today that addresses issues facing the elderly. They felt that perhaps there is a place for a show like *Winslow House*. People are willing to accept a wide variety of programming subjects--including those raised in *Winslow House*--as long as the program has basic qualities that provide entertainment, spark interest, or are informative. However, it seems the quality of the writing and production will be central to the success or failure of the show, regardless of its theme.

2. *Up and Coming* This section describes a research project on *Up and Coming* among 97 viewers in Washington, D.C., and Seattle, Washington. Ten focus panels were conducted, five in each of the two cities. These focus groups lasted approximately two hours each and investigated participants' attitudes and opinions about the program, its production, and the concepts it explored. The research took place between July 14 and 17, 1980, and the characteristics of the participants were as follows:

PANEL	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	LOCATION	AGE GROUP	RACE
1	12	Wash.,D.C.	20-55	White
2	10	Wash.,D.C.	30-55	Black
3	10	Wash.,D.C.	14-19	Black
4	12	Wash.,D.C.	14-19	Black
5	11	Wash.,D.C.	14-19	White
6	11	Seattle	20-55	White
7	7	Seattle	30-55	Black
8	8	Seattle	14-19	Black
9	8	Seattle	14-19	White
10	8	Seattle	14-19	Black

The sessions began with an introduction by the moderator and warm up questions about television viewing habits. Each panel then viewed the pilot and completed written questionnaires about it. These questionnaires obtained initial reactions and comments from each participant, unbiased by any opinions of other viewers. Then there followed a one-to-one and a half-hour group discussion about the program. This discussion period explored all the attitudes and opinions of the participants and developed their recommendations for changes and improvements to the show.

a. Quantitative Data

Each participant completed a questionnaire immediately after watching the pilot. The findings of these questionnaires are presented in eight charts in this section. It should be noted that the participants' initial comments generally were more negative than their final rating of the program or their group discussion comments. Many viewers of this pilot spoke more freely about their positive feelings once they heard the other participants speak up.

At the end of each discussion group, participants were asked to rate the program again in order to compare their attitudes. After they had the opportunity to talk about the pilot in a group setting, the majority of the black participants rated the show more positively. However, the majority of the white participants rated the show more negatively after the

group discussion. On a scale of one to ten ("one" as the lowest rating and "ten" as the highest), the results were:

	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Wash., D.C.	0	5	1	8	5	12	3	10	1	1
Seattle	6	9	7	7	1	1	1	0	0	0
Total	6	14	8	15	6	13	4	10	1	1

This summary chart should be compared with those that follow in this section and represents a first impression rating. All figures are based on the number of people responding to the particular question. Not all participants responded to every question.

Table 36
Hours of Television Watched Each Week
by *Up and Coming* Focus Group Members

GROUP	COMMERCIAL HOURS 1-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-30
14-19, White	6	4	4	0	0	1
14-19, Black	4	6	1	6	1	15
20-55, White	4	4	6	1	2	4
30-55, Black with Teenager	0	3	3	2	1	5
Total	14	17	14	9	4	25
	NONCOMMERCIAL HOURS 1-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-30
14-19, White	10	4	0	0	0	0
14-19, Black	7	10	5	1	1	5
20-55, White	9	4	2	1	0	0
30-55, Black with Teenager	4	4	0	1	0	0
Total	30	22	7	3	1	5
Wash., D.C.	22	12	2	1	1	1
Seattle	8	10	5	2	0	4
Total	30	22	7	3	1	5

Table 37
General Rating of *Up and Coming* by Focus Group

	EXCELLENT			GOOD		FAIR		POOR		
GROUP	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
14-19, White	0	0	2	5	4	4	1	1	1	0
14-19 Black	5	8	8	9	5	3	1	0	0	0
20-55, White	0	1	0	4	5	6	5	0	1	1
30-55, Black with Teenager	2	2	5	3	0	1	0	2	0	0
Total	7	11	15	21	14	14	7	3	2	1
Wash., D.C.	1	4	7	13	10	9	6	2	1	1
Seattle	6	7	8	8	4	5	1	1	1	0
Total	7	11	15	21	14	14	7	3	2	1

Table 38
Focus Group's Interest in *Up and Coming* Subject Matter

	VERY INTERESTED			MODERATELY INTERESTED				NOT INTERESTED		
GROUP	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
14-19, White	0	1	2	3	1	7	1	3	0	1
14-19, Black	7	8	10	3	2	6	1	2	0	0
20-55, White	0	2	3	6	4	2	3	0	1	2
30-55, Black with Teenager	5	5	2	2	1	0	0	1	0	0
Total	12	15	17	14	8	15	5	6	1	3
Wash., D.C.	6	6	9	6	6	12	3	5	0	1
Seattle	6	9	8	8	2	3	2	1	1	2
Total	12	15	17	14	8	15	5	6	1	3

Table 39
Focus Group Assessment of
Production Quality of *Up and Coming*

	EXCELLENT			GOOD		FAIR		POOR		
GROUP	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
14-19, White	1	1	0	7	2	3	4	1	0	0
14-19, Black	6	5	5	11	3	6	2	0	1	0
20-55, White	0	0	2	4	5	6	4	0	0	0
30-55, Black with Teenager	1	2	4	5	1	1	2	0	0	0
Total	8	8	11	27	11	16	12	1	1	0
Wash., D.C.	2	5	5	11	8	12	8	1	1	0
Seattle	6	3	6	16	3	4	4	0	0	0
Total	8	8	11	27	11	16	12	1	1	1

Table 40
Focus Group Evaluation of
Actors' Performances in *Up and Coming*

	EXCELLENT			GOOD		FAIR		POOR		
GROUP	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
14-19, White	0	3	2	5	4	5	0	0	0	0
14-19, Black	8	4	9	9	6	2	0	0	0	0
20-55, White	1	1	1	3	7	6	3	1	0	0
30-55, Black with Teenager	3	2	4	5	0	2	0	0	0	0
Total	12	10	16	22	17	15	3	1	1	0
Wash., D.C.	5	5	9	10	13	11	1	0	0	0
Seattle	7	5	7	12	4	4	2	1	0	0
Total	12	10	16	22	17	15	3	1	0	0

Table 41
Focus Group Evaluation of
Up and Coming Music

	EXCELLENT			GOOD		FAIR		POOR		
GROUP	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
14-19, White	0	0	1	4	2	2	3	3	2	0
14-19, Black	7	8	4	10	3	5	1	1	0	0
20-55, White	0	0	3	2	3	7	4	1	2	0
30-55, Black with Teenager	2	0	5	4	1	2	1	0	0	0
Total	9	8	13	20	9	16	9	5	4	0
Wash., D.C.	2	3	6	13	4	11	7	4	1	0
Seattle	7	5	7	7	5	5	2	1	3	0
Total	9	8	13	20	9	16	9	5	4	0

Table 42
Focus Group Evaluation of
Plot and Storyline in *Up and Coming*

	EXCELLENT			GOOD		FAIR		POOR		
GROUP	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
14-19, White	0	0	7	2	1	5	1	2	0	1
14-19, Black	8	6	9	5	5	3	1	0	0	0
20-55, White	0	2	1	4	3	6	2	2	1	2
30-55, Black with Teenager	2	3	5	3	1	1	0	1	0	0
Total	10	11	22	14	10	15	4	5	1	3
Wash., D.C.	3	7	11	8	7	8	3	4	0	1
Seattle	7	4	11	6	3	7	1	1	1	2
Total	10	11	22	14	10	15	4	5	1	3

Table 43
Additional Focus Group Responses
to *Up and Coming*

	YES	NO
Would you recommend this show to others?	66	25
I found this show to be:		
- Informative/Educational	57	38
- Similar to other television programming	61	39
- Imaginative/Creative	48	43
- Boring	21	61
- Relevant to my life	51	52
- Enjoyable viewing	73	20

My favorite character was:	NUMBER OF VOTES
- High Rise	25
- Kevin	25
- Joanne	36
- Kevin's mother	5
- Joanne's friend	—
- Lambert State recruiter	—

b. Qualitative Findings

To establish rapport, at the beginning of each panel participants were asked to introduce themselves to the group and state the television shows they liked and disliked. Their responses varied:

Washington, D.C.

Panel	Shows Liked	Shows Disliked
White Adults (Ages 20-55)	Science Fiction; Talk Shows; News Programs; Old Movies; *60 Minutes;* PBS Programs; *Sesame Street; M*A*S*H;* Documentaries.	Game Shows; Soap Operas; Situation Comedies.
White Teens (Ages 14-19)	*Dallas; Benny Hill;* Old Movies; Science Fiction; *White Shadow; M*A*S*H; Barney Miller;* Johnny Carson.	1960 Reruns; Situation Comedies (with exceptions); *WKRP;* Game Shows.
Black Adults (Ages 30-55)	News Programs; Old Movies; *Jeffersons; M*A*S*H; Good Times;* Most of the black-oriented shows; Sports Telecasts.	Game Shows; Soap Operas.
Black Teens (Ages 14-19)	*20/20; White Shadow; 60 Minutes;* Documentaries; Sports Shows; News Programs.	Soap Operas; Talk Shows; *Dukes of Hazzard.*

In general, the television programs that interested the majority of the respondents were ones like *Masterpiece Theatre, 60 Minutes, Benny Hill,* old movies, news programs, educational and informational programs, science fiction, and sports telecasts. Participants disliked game shows and soap operas. Many of the respondents didn't care for the situation comedies now being aired.

The majority of the white participants in both age categories (20-55 and 14-19) and some black teens commented that public television was a good source for viewing programs that were both entertaining and substantive. However, these same respondents felt that there was not enough public television programming.

When asked why they watch television, the majority of the participants mentioned the

Seattle

Panel	Shows Liked	Shows Disliked
White Adults (Ages 20-55)	*CBS Reports;* Science Fiction; *Masterpiece Theatre; 60 Minutes.*	Soap Operas; *Hee Haw;* Game Shows.
White Teens (Ages 14-19)	*Benny Hill;* News Programs; *Saturday Night Live;* Old Movies.	Soap Operas; *Hello Larry;* Game Shows.
Black Adults (Ages 30-55)	Documentaries; *60 Minutes;* Norman Lear Productions; Sports; Situation Comedies (Black).	*Muppets; Hee Haw;* Political Shows; Soap Operas.
Black Teens (Ages 14-19)	Show Time; Sports Telecasts; Old Movies; *20/20; 60 Minutes.*	Soap Operas; Archie Bunker; *Mork and Mindy; Laverne and Shirley.*

following reasons: entertainment, educational possibilities, information, nothing else to do, pass the time.

The comments in this section on qualitative findings are divided between the two test cities, Washington, D.C., and Seattle. In each category, there is a short summary of the prevailing attitudes followed by selected representative comments to illustrate the points of view. Although there were many similar comments made in each city, the Seattle viewers were a less sophisticated group than those in Washington, D.C. Sophistication differences were reflected in communicative ability, educational backgrounds, professions, and overall insights.

1) Washington, D.C.

Initial reactions to *Up and Coming* were varied but the majority of comments were negative among the white viewers, both teenagers and adults. The black teenage groups and the older black participants found the pilot entertaining and thought it had an important message. The black viewers' comments were more positive.

(a) White Participant Panels

The older white participants (ages 20-55) found this episode of *Up and Coming* "slightly" entertaining with potential. However, the majority of this group felt that the writing was poor, disjointed, and slow moving. The majority of these participants thought it was very boring throughout. A few of the participants found the pilot educational but the message was overshadowed by the fact that the show was so slow.

Most older whites agreed with the following comment of one participant,

> "I find it extremely basic, it moved very slowly--every issue was drowned out. It did have a tone of education, but I did not find it that entertaining."

This group of white participants felt that the issues touched upon were good but they were not developed properly. They felt that with better writing this could have been an excellent program for teenagers and preteens.

Whites thought the characters were attractive but too stereotyped. They felt that the roles of the main characters, High Rise, Kevin, and Joanne, were overplayed and that the dialogue between High Rise and Kevin was not believable. Some complained,

> "There was too much slang and hand slapping."

The majority of the older white participants said that they would recommend this show to teenagers. However, others would only recommend this pilot if it were

> "Written better and faster moving."

The participants who would recommend the show to others felt that it would appeal to both black and white teenage audiences.

Most older white participants said that although the show was somewhat entertaining, they did not learn anything about teenage life that they didn't already know. One person stated it this way,

> "After viewing this show, I did not learn a damn thing. I don't think the writers should toy with the idea of informing the public, they should concentrate on making it more entertaining."

Many others agreed.

The white teenagers' (ages 14 to 19) initial reactions to this pilot were generally negative. They felt that this episode of *Up and Coming* was boring in most places and felt that it was written very poorly compared to similar shows. This group felt that it was not very entertaining or informative. However, they did think it has potential. Some participants made the following comments:

> "It has potential as a strictly entertaining show. I didn't like the preaching aspect of the show and felt that the kids in the pilot were not very realistic. But it has potential."
>
> "If the writing were better and there were a little more action and a little less preaching, it would be entertaining."
>
> "Boring, but has some potential if improved in the areas of acting and writing."

The majority of this group agreed with the above comments.

When asked about the story line and plot, the majority of this group commented that

they were "excellent" to "good." They commented that it lacked good writing, acting, and creativity. Some of the comments were:

> "Although the plot was good, there was a basic lack of originality throughout. It seemed to draw too much on stereotypical characters and presented a rehashed message."
> "The plot was excellent but good writing and imagination were not present."
> "It has recognizable story line potential more than the usual sitcom trash on TV."

Others who did not like the show felt it was too much like the other black-oriented shows.

When asked whether or not they would watch this program on a regular basis, most participants in this group said that they would not. They felt that the show would have a difficult time drawing them away from other favorite television programs. Some said,

> "I would not watch the program, it would not hold my interest as is."
> "I would only watch the program if nothing else was on the tube. It lacked that attention-holding element--I'd get bored."

This group of teenagers said that they would recommend this show to others. They felt that if the show developed, they would try to watch it. Again, these participants saw the potential for this show as an entertaining program.

This group was evenly divided as to whether or not this program should be seen on public television or on a commercial television station.

The participants were only moderately interested in the subject matter. Most of the group felt this way because they had heard this subject too many times before in real life and didn't want to be confronted with it while trying to be entertained.

These participants thought the production quality was "average." "It lacked quality camera work," according to many respondents.

The majority of the group felt that the production quality could be improved, especially the writing. The participants had no real opinion on the music. They did not seem to notice it.

White teenagers had the following overall impressions of the characters:

> "attractive, but too stereotyped and not that believable."
> "too many stereotypes--seemed to portray black teens as hand slapping, jive talking and less than serious individuals--with only one exception--Joanne."
> "the actors and actresses were good--they played their roles well."
> "the characters, for the most part didn't 'seem believable.' "
> "would have liked to have seen more character development."

(b) Black Participant Panels

Most black participants found this episode of *Up and Coming* educational and entertaining. Some said,

> "I found the film very relevant--I also found it quite educational."

"I enjoyed watching the film--it was relevant and it had a message."

"Although slow with the action, it was entertaining."

When asked immediately after the program, "What did you think of it?", most black adult participants felt that the program was both "positive" and "relevant." Other comments were:

"The program was positive, had good value lessons relevant to teens. The message about reasons for staying in school was positive."

"There should be more programs like this one."

"Although entertaining and educational, there were times when I felt that the story lacked continuity and was slightly boring."

The majority of black adults felt that the plot was excellent to good. Only a few of these participants felt that the plot was bad.

Some of the participants thought that the show was boring in places but still entertaining or that the plot was "OK" but had room for improvement. Many of the participants commented that they knew the outcome of the story before the end.

Many black adult viewers liked the fact that the storyline showed the black family in a positive light. The participants felt that this program's positive portrayal of the cohesive black family was unique and necessary. These respondents felt that good black television shows were "few and far between."

As far as the characters were concerned, the majority of the adults felt that the actors and actresses were believable and played their roles very well. Some members of the group thought that the characters could have been developed more. Most of the group said that they could relate to the characters and felt that these characters represented a very positive image of black teens.

Adult participants were asked to comment on the overall production quality of the film, including camera work, sets, and writing. Most of the negative comments were directed at the writing. Many participants rated the writing as only fair and said that it could use improvements in places.

The majority of this group of older blacks said they would watch the program on a regular basis. Comments like the following were representative:

"As long as the show presented a positive image of black people, I would watch the program."

"If the show remained relevant, informative and educational, I would watch it."

The group felt that they would strongly recommend this program to other blacks, especially black teenagers:

"Black teenagers need a positive force to identify with. This film, although not perfect, begins to establish this positive image of blacks."

"I would tell all my friends to view the program if it aired."

When asked the time that this show should be aired on television, the majority of the black adults felt that it should be shown during prime time. Others felt that the program would get better ratings if it were aired on Saturday mornings or Sunday afternoons.

Most participants expected to see *Up and Coming* on commercial television. When asked whether it might be on public television, the comments were:

> "It would die."
> "I'd watch it, although I do not watch public television stations."
> "Blacks do not traditionally watch public television, and therefore many may never discover a program like this that had a message."
> "Commercial television would aid its survival--but it would be difficult to find a sponsor because it is not in the same league as *The Jeffersons* or other successful black-oriented programs."

Black teenage groups had favorable initial reactions to *Up and Coming*. They thought it was "good to see a potentially educational black program."

The majority of the teens rated the pilot "good" to "excellent." The majority of the group found the pilot informative, educational, and entertaining. Comments throughout the groups were:

> "It was very down-to-earth. I could relate to it."
> "I think it addressed some very serious problems that young blacks are facing in our society."
> "I thought it was very entertaining."
> "I thoroughly enjoyed watching the pilot. I felt that it was educational, yet funny and entertaining to a certain degree. It was worth my time."

Although the majority of the teens felt that this was a good show, others complained that it was too slow-moving in many parts. Some comments included:

> "It got boring, but it was still a good show."
> "It was OK, parts were very boring--like in-between the middle and the end of the program."
> "The show was too long--it got a little boring at times."
> "It needed a little more action to hold my attention--a little boring for me."

The majority of the group felt that the ending could have been less predictable. Everyone seemed to know the outcome. They did feel that *Up and Coming* touched upon relevant and important issues that will confront them in life and therefore made for a good story.

When asked to compare this program to other TV shows with similar themes, these predominantly high school age students felt that the message and educational value often surpassed the *White Shadow, James at 15, Good Times,* and *What's Happening.* However, in terms of production quality, *Up and Coming* was weak compared to these other shows.

Many of the black teenagers felt that the characters were too stereotyped. They felt that the characters overplayed their roles and did not paint a true picture of how teenagers act today. They felt that they were watching high school kids the way they were in the fifties. This stereotypical behavior offended the group. They felt that some of the "jive-talking" and "hand-slapping" was both *passé* and unreal. Some of the comments were:

> "Segments of this film portrayed blacks as only wanting to party all the time; not wanting to study enough, not wanting to

excel in school; stereotypes that have developed about blacks were perpetuated in this pilot."

"I think they played off being black too much . . . it was too stereotypical--too much hand-slapping. Black teenagers don't do that so much anymore. I also felt that these jive-talking characters were what whites think is the way blacks speak."

"It was too stereotypical--I didn't like the acting--the characters overplayed their roles."

"I didn't like the language in it. They were trying to make it sound like the way people sound today--but they were a little far behind."

For the most part the black teenage participants felt that the stereotypical behaviors gave the program a negative image and subtracted from the positive image that the show was trying to project. The majority of the black teenagers felt that the characters needed to be "toned down" to more realistic dimensions. Even though many of the participants could relate to some of the characters, they felt that the characters were not believable in the pilot.

When asked about the production quality of the pilot, the black teenagers had no major complaints. Most of the negative comments were aimed at the writing. They felt that improvements were needed, especially relating to the predictability of the ending. A better script could have alleviated the boredom with a faster pace and more action. The majority of the black teenagers felt that this particular episode was enjoyable viewing, but they didn't think that they could view it religiously. Some of the comments included:

"I found it educational and informative, but I don't think I'd watch it that often."

"It would really depend upon what else was on television at the time--it would not be my first choice during prime television-watching time."

"I would watch the program from time to time, see what the theme of the particular episode was, but I would not view it all the time."

"If the action picked up, I'd watch it more often; however, until that happens, I'd watch it from time to time."

There were a few people who said they would watch it as much as possible because of its potential.

The majority of the black teens said that they would recommend the program to others. Opinion varied as to what groups of persons would enjoy the program the most. Many people felt that this show would benefit a younger group of blacks. They were very much against recommending the program to their white counterparts. They felt that because of its stereotyped portrayals of young blacks, whites would continue to believe the myth that all blacks "play basketball, party, and slap hands to communicate."

Overall, the pilot was widely accepted among the black teenagers. They enjoyed watching it and felt that a more positive image of the black family was projected. They felt that improvements in certain areas were needed, but that the show was educational and had a positive message.

2) Seattle

Up and Coming was very favorably received by the participants in Seattle. Eighty percent of the persons rating the pilot gave it a "Good" or "Excellent" rating. More than half thought it was excellent.

(a) White Participant Panels

Many of the reasons for both the evaluations and the suggested improvements varied between age and race. However the variances between races were obvious. To a greater extent than black viewers, whites found *Up and Coming* similar to other programs such as *White Shadow, Welcome Back Kotter,* and *Room 222.* Their major complaints were that it did not contain as much action or energy as similar programs, and did not have a strong central character. One example mentioned was George Jefferson on *The Jeffersons.*

Many of the white viewers felt that the hand slapping and dialogue were much too "funky." Most of the white viewers thought the portrayal of the roles and situations were realistic. However, many members of the adult white audience felt there may have been too much realism. They did not want to look at this type of realism (i.e. everyday, mundane-type issues). One participant summarized his feelings:

> "Although the characters, acting, and situations are realistic, it is not the kind of thing most of us say we watch television for."

Many of the white adult participants felt that the plot or morality message "came on a little too heavy for the young people who would watch it." One participant stated, "Too heavy . . . one point was made ten different ways."

The white teenagers were more receptive to the realism and moral aspects. One young man said, ". . . reminds me of the *White Shadow* not because of basketball, but because everyone seems to be cashing in on inner city schools. But this was the closest to realistic that I've ever seen."

Another young woman countered, "It was different from other programs. It didn't have anyone offensive like J.J. of *Good Times.* The people are likable, and the morality message was more relevant and contemporary." This young woman was the oldest participant, and appeared to be the most sophisticated. Her comment received agreement from others.

Another teenage participant stated, "It does not have senseless comedy."

Most of the white participants, teenage and adult, felt that *Up and Coming* would be most appealing to young people in their early teens, between the ages of 11 and 15. They didn't think it contained enough action for older teenagers. One white adult participant said, ". . . teenagers are watching *The Rocky Mountain Horror Show.*" [sic] Although most participants, black and white, felt the pilot would be slightly more appealing to male viewers, all three white teenage females in one panel thought it would be more appealing to female viewers.

The white participants, both teenage and adult, felt that the episode would be similarly appealing to black and white audiences. The teenagers described it as "universal," while the adults felt that "with the exception of the jive talk an all white cast would make no significant difference in the program."

Many of the adult whites felt that a white person wrote the script, and that the family

represented a typical, middle-class American family more so than a black middle-class American family.

Some of the suggestions provided by the white adult audiences include:

"Add more comic relief."
"Make the mother the strong central character."
"Develop more action."

White teenage viewers suggested:

"Put it on prime time."
"Use it as a tool on public television."
"Add more characters."
"Keep it sports-minded." (Some disagreed.)

(b) Black Participant Panels

The black participants found similarities between *Up and Coming*, and some of the other black- and school-oriented television programs. However, they saw *Up and Coming* as significantly different. When asked how it compared to *White Shadow, Good Times, The Jeffersons*, etc., some typical responses were:

"No comparison."
"It provides a message, the rest is just entertainment."
"This gets away from school a little more than *Room 222*."
"... I don't think that was nothing like *White Shadow* ... *White Shadow* was basically based on the white coach and the black players .... this was based on the individual himself and what he was going to do."

Black viewers thought it was a good idea to show a black family in a positive light. In this respect, many felt *Up and Coming* could serve a special and unique purpose. The following dialogue between two young women addresses the portrayal of the black family, and is indicative of how the groups felt overall:

"I think that's good too, because most black shows, you know, they don't have a mother, or they don't have a father or something like that. But this shows that some black families are together and have a whole family .... Some people don't have an idea about what being a black family is. They think you live in the projects ... "
"... or in an apartment house ... I want a house, with a daddy and some money."
"And the father had a job and wasn't on welfare."

The black audience found *Up and Coming* both informative and entertaining. They liked both the message and the way it was presented. *Up and Coming* was realistic, and enabled everyone to relate personally to the characters and situations.

A few viewers mentioned that they appreciated that the mother was not the typical "Fat Momma" stereotype of black women.

Some black viewers, both teenage and adult, thought the dialogue in the beginning of the show was a little overdone and outdated, but many others felt it was appropriate.

Most of the black audience thought the program depicted a black middle-class family, and many were disturbed that the father was not portrayed in the episode. A few did not

like the fact that only middle-class characters were portrayed. Some thought the producer and/or writer were white.

More black viewers than white viewers felt that this program would be appealing to a very broad segment of the population. The segment included:

the participants themselves and their age group,
pre-teens,
white audiences generally, and
a general audience.

Most black viewers felt the program should be aired about 8 p.m. on nights other than Friday or Saturday, but should not be aired in competition with another black-oriented program.

Black panelists expressed a strong feeling that potential black viewers might miss the program if it were aired by a public broadcasting station. One black teenager stated:

> "If it were on PBS, nobody would watch it. A lot of people when you say Channel 9 (PBS) think *Sesame Street*."

Others equated PBS programming with education and documentaries.

When asked what could be done to enhance their awareness of *Up and Coming* if it were broadcast on the public broadcasting station, the following suggestions and comments were provided:

Advertise heavily
Show commercials on network channels
Advertise in the *TV Guide* on the cover and in the "Close-Up" section.
Promote it with actors on TV and radio and in magazines
Advertise on WKYC radio station.
"Advertising wouldn't hurt. You never know what's on Channel 9." (PBS)
"Even in the *TV Guide*, they only get a tiny square."

Many of the black teenage viewers discovered interesting, black-oriented, programs on PBS when flipping channels. Most agreed that *Up and Coming* would capture their attention if they passed it on the dial.

To capture the attention of both people like themselves and those they think would be potential viewers, panelists would describe *Up and Coming* as:

"day-to-day experiences of the black middle-class family"
"entertainment for the whole family"
"black family on the move"
"comedy-drama"
"friends trying to make a future for themselves"

Many of the viewers balked at the following suggestions:

"Comedy Special"--Some thought this might imply a one shot deal.
"Educational"--Many commented that this might scare-off a lot of people.

Some suggestions were provided by the black viewers to enhance the receptivity of *Up and Coming* to people like themselves:

> "Maintain a focus on today's problems of black people."

"Let humor be incidental."
"Keep it relevant."
"Don't use a laugh track."
"Tone down the language a little, some of that is outlandish. People do talk regular, they come in and say 'Hi' . . . . High Rise, sometimes, was just getting out of hand . . ."

Make the show an hour long (there was unanimous agreement in the group that made this suggestion).

Many felt strongly that more emphasis should be given to the rest of the family, especially the father.

Many black and white participants stated they would have liked to have learned more about Paul Robeson.

c. Conclusions and Recommendations

At the end of each panel, participants were invited to offer concluding comments to the producer of *Up and Coming* and to recommend changes. There were a few spontaneous quips such as "start over," "research the subject matter more thoroughly," and "take out the morality messages." But generally, participants felt that the concept had merit as long as certain areas could be improved. These areas included: the writing, the characterizations, and adding more action to the storyline.

Up and Coming would be favorably received by most black viewers, according to the majority of the participants. Both the black and white viewers offered suggestions to maximize the impact of the show. Unfortunately, their major suggestions were in conflict.

The white viewers wanted more humor, a strong central character, and less "preaching." The black viewers wanted more of the unique realism and relevancy which they described as presently non-existent in most of the black-oriented television shows.

Based on this research, it appears that only a small minority of white viewers would watch and enjoy *Up and Coming* as it is presently written and staged. A majority of the black viewers would watch this program from time to time. Numerous constructive suggestions were made that participants felt would improve the program. The primary topic areas were:

1. *The Writing*--Comments about the writing were fairly consistent throughout. Most participants, black and white, felt that the quality could be improved. They felt that it must be "picked up" and "tightened up."

2. *The Characters*--Both groups, black and white, felt that the characters should be developed more fully. Both groups thought that the main characters were too stereotypical and all the hand slapping and "jive talking" should be toned down. Both groups felt that interactions between characters should be improved. Both groups would have liked to have seen more of the family.

3. *The Plot*--The black teens felt that basketball and sports in general should be played down. They felt this was *passé*.

4. *Technical Production*--Both groups felt that the sound and camera work could be improved. Some areas of concern were:

Sound was artificial and insufficient in the classroom scene.
In the picnic scene, the lighting was insufficient and the sound was out of sync with the dancing.

Many of the participants didn't care for the use of video tape, as opposed to film.

Many viewers, especially among the black participants, recognized the potential of a series like *Up and Coming*. They felt that the producers should work harder on the writing and production quality as the series develops. The viewers of this pilot felt that although the messages and issues are important, emphasis should be placed on trying to make the series more entertaining in order to keep the interest of its viewers.

III. CONCLUSIONS

OCR analyses of the preceding reports for CPB's Program Fund concentrated on the identification of similar findings about each pilot, across the three studies of their appeal and effectiveness. These cross-methodological repeated findings are explored in detail in Part A of this section of the report.

The second most important focus of our analysis was a comparison of the three pilot-testing methods along six evaluation criteria: (1) providing articulate and relatively unbiased viewer feedback; (2) facilitating the development of norm-building pilot testing criteria; (3) flexibility in the assessment of special programming objectives; (4) producing meaningful diagnostic feedback to producers; (5) yielding suggestions for broad programming directions; and (6) providing timely and cost-effective sampling and data analysis. Evaluative profiles of the three systems, as utilized in the pilot tests of *Winslow House* and *Up and Coming* are discussed in Part B of this section.

A. Convergent and Divergent Findings Across the Three Research Methods

Before reviewing the reliability of pilot test findings across the three systems, it is important to emphasize that methodological features which distinguish the systems profoundly influence the nature of the resulting data. Figure 8 identifies six critical design features which can be expected to affect the nature and direction of the viewer feedback collected by each system. The Percy System and PEAC, for example, contrast sharply with traditional focus groups, in terms of the extent to which viewer feedback is structured versus open-ended (standardization of feedback). Furthermore, the research setting of the Percy System is unique compared to the group viewing and discussion arrangements used by PEAC and focus group researchers. Because such system differences explore viewer reactions from a variety of contexts and perspectives, it is informative to assess the reliability of findings produced by each research method.

1. *Up and Coming* Figures 9, 10, and 11 abstract test findings for the three systems. Reliable findings are circled, while conflicting results are circumscribed with a box.

Except for the Percy System which is unable to compare reactions of different audience subgroups, there was a reliably stronger program appeal among the target audience, compared to a general audience.

In terms of pacing, the focus groups diverged from PEAC results in identifying a boring and slow script, while PEAC responses emphasized a cluttered storyline. If one subscribes to Percy System interpretations of high response rate as correlated with viewer involvement, VOXBOX data would also contradict the focus group's problems with boredom.

Again, while VOXBOX data cannot provide a comparison, focus group and PEAC viewers felt the father should have played a strong role (instead of an entirely absent one) in the episode tested.

Stereotyping problems were cited by focus group and PEAC viewers who would prefer less "jive talking and hand-slapping" by the young male leads and a more serious and responsibly ambitious characterization. VOXBOX data reveal highly negative responses to a

scene in the coach's office, in which the two main characters heavily engage in these apparently offensive behaviors.

The program concept, the idea of programs intended to present more realistic and desirable images of black family life and to provide viewing alternatives to commercial fare, was strongly affirmed by the two systems which allowed researchers to directly articulate that concept--PEAC and focus group discussions. Results from these two methods also revealed that the target group approved this portrayal of black family life as a considerable improvement on commercial TV's black-oriented programs. Where, in the Percy System, the viewer was left to his own conceptualization of the program's spirit and intentions, and where very few minority panelists belong to the system, the programming objectives were applauded just as loudly, but perceived to be broader value statements furthering the need for planning one's personal, educational, and professional futures.

Finally, across the three systems, Percy panel data prove the most positive. Compared to the more diversified and occasionally divided results identified in the focus group and PEAC studies, the overall Percy System evaluations registered at the end of the program are remarkably positive (92 percent). This is an interesting contrast with the evaluations registered during the program as viewers watched it; within-program evaluations divided almost evenly (45 percent negative, 55 percent positive).

Figure 8
Distinguishing Research Design Features of
Three Pilot Testing Methods

	Viewer Feedback Channel	Standardization of Feedback	Research Setting	Confidentiality of Feedback	Data Reporting Formats	Sampling Flexibility
Percy System	Modified remote control device wired to TV set	Standardized VOX response labels are not programmable. Can be supplemented with structured phone interviews	Individual panelists' homes	VOXBOX responses registered privately Supplementary phone interviews private	Time-locked graphs of viewer response, plus interpretive text	None; panelists are permanent, and system does not allow special analysis of panel subgroups
PEAC	Portable, handheld response device	PEAC device responses standardized but programmable per testing Can be supplemented with open-ended group discussion	Group meeting facility	PEAC device responses registered privately Supplementary group discussions are public	Time-locked graphs of responses of all viewers and of specified viewer subgroups Plus interpretative text	Flexible sampling and subsample analyses
Traditional Focus Group	Open discussion moderated by group leader	Depends on specificity of moderator's discussion guide	Group meeting facility	Group discussion public Supplementary questionnaire responses private	Interpretative text reporting discussion points and exemplary verbatims	Flexible sampling, but subsample analyses somewhat subjective

Figure 9
Traditional Focus Group Results for
Up and Coming

97 Viewers in
Seattle and Washington, D.C.

Overall Evaluation

initial reactions very favorable among all groups of viewers

but, with discussion . . .

older black viewers
—favorable
—would watch regularly

young black viewers
—favorable
—"enjoyable,"
—"informative"
—but would not watch regularly

general audience
—unfavorable
—would not watch regularly

Production Quality

"good" to "fair"

black viewers
—poorer quality than black-oriented CTV programs

general audience

older
—good concept badly developed

young
—no originality
—but "has potential."

Script

storyline "good" to "excellent"

black viewers
—plot excellent but a little boring
—ending too predictable

general audience

older
—slow, boring script
—unrealistic dialogue between Kevin and High Rise
—too much slang and hand slapping
—subject matter of universal appeal

young
—script poor, boring
—too didactic

Figure 9 (cont.)

Characters/Acting

rated "good" to "excellent"

black viewers
—actors believable but characters need more development
—enjoyed attractive mother
—father should play strong role

general audience

older
—High Rise, Kevin and Joanne overplayed
—a typical middle class, U.S. family regardless of race

young
—characters stereotyped unrealistic and overplayed
—characters shallow
—disliked "jive talking" and hand slapping

Portrayal of Black Life

young white viewers
—no different from other black-oriented shows

black viewers
—positive TV portrayals of a cohesive black family is essential
—this program provides one
—program confronts important real life issues

young black viewers
—young blacks portrayed as fun loving and unmotivated
—need more ambitious, serious, better developed characters

Perceived Message

white viewers
—only moderate interest in subject matter
—older viewers gave low information scores
—messages "too heavy," not subtle enough

black viewers
—program provides more meaningful messages than CTV black-oriented programs
—high interest in subject matter

Recommendations

all viewers
—more actions
—deeper characterization
—tighter script

white viewers
—want more humor
—less "preaching"

black viewers
—want more realism
—focus on problems of today's blacks
—less jive
—not for PTV, because blacks don't watch it
—if on PTV, promote extensively

Figure 10
PEAC Results for *Up and Coming*

96 Viewers
Dayton, Ohio

Overall Evaluation			
—target audience	well received	interesting, relevant	most would view
—general audience	neutral	less interested, less relevant	half might view, half might not
Perceived Stereotyping	five instances of stereotyping all involve High Rise clowning with Kevi..	High Rise is negative image of comic, impulsive young black male; disliked his slang, bouncing and hand-slapping	
Portrayal of Contemporary Black Life			
—target audience	more positive portrayal than CTV offers	most like *The White Shadow;* better than *The Jeffersons*	more serious, less flashy; characters better developed than in CTV
—general audience	not very different from most TV portrayals		
Viewer Involvement and Comprehension			
—target audience	wavers for first 12 minutes until Joanne arrives at Kevin's	younger viewers more interested than older ones	all groups show a flat interest profile; no notably involving or boring scenes, but Joanne's visit to Kevin does elicit greater involvement
—general audience	wavers for first 12 minutes	older viewers more interested than younger viewers	

Figure 10 (cont.)

Perceived Message and Social Impact				
—target audience	applauded intent of program to portray positive black image		alerts viewers to problems of black families and of adolescents	one should prepare for a career early in life
—general audience	provide strategies for solving daily problems		alerts viewers to problems of adolescents	adolescents are torn between social life and hard work; academic success is vital to your future
Production Quality				
—target audience	"excellent"/"good"	program too cluttered, too many events	too much slang in dialogue	minor credibility problems —recruiter following High Rise to friend's home —mother's ignorance of her son's grades —son's ignorance of his mother's career goals
—general audience	"good"/"fair"	story events cluttered		
Characters	all realistic	Joanne and Kevin's mother favorites of target audience Kevin and Joanne favorites of general audience needs more development of High Rises' and Kevin's characters		mother enjoyed, a responsible, assertive black female model
Recommendations	present a more responsible and serious young black male, one in charge of his own life and not dependent on a black female	father should have played a strong role in this episode		target audience wants more development of the analysis of the black experience

Figure 11

Percy System - KCTS Results for *Up and Coming*

33 Percy households
58 KCTS phone Respondents

High Response Rate
N = 220

PERCY SYSTEM **Overall Evaluation At End of Program**	8% negative —8% "boring"	92% positive —34% "credible" —30% "excellent" —12% "informative" —10% liked personalities — 6% "funny"		
Evaluation During the Program	44.8% negative —14.7% disliked personalities —11.8% "boring" —10.6% "unbelievable" — 5.3% "dumb" — 2.4% "zap"	55% positive —17.6% liked personalities —13.5% "excellent" —12.9% "credible" —10.0% "funny" — 1.2% "informative"		
Story Incidents Evoking Strong Audience Response	high rate of negative response when Kevin and High Rise are in Coach's office	high positive responses to Kevin's mother	moderately positive response to Kevin and Joanne's interactions	
KCTS PHONE SURVEY (20 black respondents) (14 respondents under 20)		very favorable evaluations by all viewers		
Overall 1-10 Scale Rating —target group —young 9.1 —older 8.6 —other viewers 8.5				
Reactions to the Program Concept	very high rating by all	enjoyed the program's realism, characters, acting and the message	program held viewers' attention, was "for people like me," was "a change of pace" and made viewers think	
Did the Program Meet its Objectives?	most said it was better than *The Jeffersons*	but blacks divided on it being better than *The White Shadow*	program message perceived to be the importance of a good education and of planning the future	limited negative reactions, but some concern that program would perpetuate myths about blacks, athletes and language

2. *Winslow House* Figures 12, 13, and 14 abstract pilot test findings across the three methods, with reliable findings once again circled and conflicting findings noted within a box.

In both the focus groups and the PEAC data, and in the phone-in KCTS audience response to *Winslow House,* once again the reactions of target group versus general audience are clearly divided. However, in this case, the general audience is more strongly critical of the production quality of the program and much less likely to predict they would consider watching it. Furthermore, the target group itself, while supporting the concept of a program intended to satisfy their needs and interests, is openly dissatisfied with this particular pilot's treatment of those areas.

Focus group discussions and PEAC data pointed to problems with a disjointed, often confusing and misinterpreted script. Both methods showed viewer involvement low and considerable criticism of ethnic and aging stereotypes. Percy data reveal a moderate response rate, once again purported to be a correlate of viewer involvement, with only two incidents evoking a high rate of audience reaction.

Focus groups and PEAC results emphasized the inability of viewers to relate to the characters, situations, and events portrayed in the program. Although the Percy System method provides no direct indication of whether or not viewers were able to identify with the program, overall program evaluations at the end of the pilot indicated that 30 percent of all responses characterized the program as "dumb" and "unbelievable." Additionally, KCTS phone interviews showed neutral ratings on the believability of characters among both younger and older viewers.

The ability of the program to present desirable alternatives to commercial television's under-representation and stereotyping of older persons is questioned by viewers in the focus group and PEAC studies. Images of older persons in the pilot are still undesirable and unrealistic. Only the KCTS phone interviews indicate the program succeeded in a positive depiction of aging.

Finally, in this case, Percy panel opinion formation moves in exactly the opposite direction it did in the evaluation of *Up and Coming.* That is, whereas overall program evaluations for *Up and Coming* were primarily positive (92 percent) compared to within-program division of opinion (45 percent positive, 55 percent negative), *Winslow House* overall program evaluations reveal a sharp division of opinion (53 percent negative, 47 percent positive) but within-program reactions are predominantly positive (82 percent).

Overviewing these convergences and divergences in test findings, OCR presented the following conclusions about the viability of each pilot.

Figure 12
Traditional Focus Group Results for
Winslow House

103 Viewers
Seattle and Washington, D.C.

Overall Evaluation

Most would not watch it

—target audience

60-70 year olds more accepting than 50-60 years olds

did not want to be typecast; complained 55+ is a very diversified group

—general audience

sympathetic with aging issues and problems, but disliked this treatment

Viewer Involvement and Comprehension

involvement waned; certain parts boring

confused about why Jake took the food in the first place

confused about the "point of the program"

Characters

did not relate to their daily lives

Jake, Emma, Jim and Millie well liked

stereotyped

"excessive ethnicity" of Emma and Jake

lack of subtlety

Mr. Green's language offensive

Mrs. Coolidge best liked actor

50-60 years complained they couldn't relate to characters or their problems

younger viewer complained of lack of any desirable role models for their own aging

trite, exaggerated, "hit you over the head"

not well-developed

their interactions are superficial and stereotyped

Figure 12 (cont.)

Script	plot disjointed and confusing, lack of continuity, too many subplots	did not like ending, "left hanging," no resolution	boarding house setting unrealistic	script uneven, poor
Treatment of Aging Issues	issues well worth treating, but not done well by this program	some complained treatment was too hard hitting and disliked the lack of subtlety	others didn't understand the point of the program	
Does the Program Offer a New Viewing Choice/Service?	would expect this to be a CTV program, not PTV perceived as too low quality for PTV	not perceived to be very different from many current CTV programs	still presents a negative and stereotyped image of older people	the program concept is important; there is no realistic TV portrayal of aging available
Recommendations	tighten dialogue	highlight only 1 or 2 characters per program	use more humor	

Figure 13
PEAC Results for *Winslow House*

N = 97 Viewers

Overall Evaluation

—target audience	very positive in both closed-question interviews and in open group discussion
—general audience	moderately positive or neutral in closed-question interviews; highly critical in open group discussion

Perceived Stereotyping

most ofted cited incidents: Emma's Jewish mother type, Mike's attack on hippies, Mike's accusation of Jim, Mike's exchange with window repairman

N.B.: general audience far more likely to complain of stereotypes, then were target audience viewers

general audience believed program reinforced stereotypes more than dispelling them

Portrayal of Aging

—target audience	perceived desirable portrayals
—general audience	perceived very undesirable portrayals

Viewer Involvement and Comprehension

highest among the target audience, throughout the program; lowest among adolescents

interest curves were flat; multiple plots did not allow any one story to develop and climax as most dramas do

involvement increased during pleasant interactions between characters (e.g. Jim and Millie) but decreased during conflicts

many viewers would have preferred to see fewer characters and plots within a single episode

misinterpretations
—Jim pushed Mike during broken window scene
—the two men in the market were helping Emma

Figure 13 (cont.)

Production Quality						
—target audience	in general, high		Emma the favorite character	evenly divided on relevance of subject matter	story line implausible	
—general audience	low, in general	too many plots and characters packed into 30 minutes	Emma, Jake and Millie rated high	subject matter irrelevant	story line plausible	bad acting; characters presents undesirable role models for their own aging; unlike older people they knew; need deeper character development
Perceived Messages and Social Impact						
(closed responses)		one-third said program demonstrated effective communication between young and old		none agreed with the statement that it dispels myths about aging	less than one fourth agreed that it: —raised awareness of old people's need —improved self-understanding or relationships with others —provided daily problem solving strategies	
—general vs. target audience comparisons		half the target group agreed the program shows older years can be rewarding if one stays productive; one third of younger viewers agreed with this		40% of the general audience said program showed that old and young differ considerably on values and morals	one fourth of the target group said the program made old people look vulnerable to crime	
Recommended Improvements						
		older viewers want violence and other unpleasant things deemphasized; prefer emphasis on the accomplishments and satisfaction of later years		none of the older characters exert any effective control over their lives; circumstances and other people create and solve their problems; would be better to make characters more effectively self-directed; younger viewers might respond more positively	—another younger character, besides Jim, could help increase general audience, attraction and involvement N.B.: Aging is a "raw nerve" and little discussed issue among our younger population; hostility of younger viewers towards *Winslow House* may well reveal their own inabilities to confront and accept their own aging	

Figure 14
Percy System - KCTS Results for
Winslow House

25 Percy Households
60 KCTS phone respondents
moderate response rate
N = 140

PERCY SYSTEM			
Overall Evaluation at End of Program	52.5% negative —20% "dumb" —12.5% "boring" —10% "unbelievable" —10% "zap"	47% positive —20% "excellent" —20% "credible" —7.5% "funny" —0.0% "informative"	
Evaluation During the Program	82% positive —24% "excellent" —20% "credible" —17% "funny" —13% "informative" — 8% "liked personalities"	18% negative —7% "dumb" —3% "boring" —3% "unbelievable" —3% "disliked personalities" —2% "zap"	
Story Incidents Evoking Strong Audience Response	the largest number of positive responses occurred when Jake and Millie went to dinner	the largest number of negative responses occurred when Mrs. Duffy asked Jim to deliver the package	
KCTS PHONE SURVEY			
Overall 1-10 Scale Rating (31 55+ viewers)		generally younger viewers evaluated the program slightly more favorably than older viewers did	
—target group	6.7		
—younger viewers	7.3		
Characters and Acting	both younger and older viewers liked Emma best and Mike Gree the least; younger viewers also scored Millie highly	neutral ratings on believability of characters among both younger and older viewers	high acting scores from older viewers
Reactions to the Program Concept	older viewers liked the focus on older people and attitudes toward aging	both younger and older viewers found the characters stereotyped and unrealistic	
Did the Program Meet Its Objectives?	program depicts older people in a positive manner	program is a change of pace from most TV	

3. Conclusions about *Up and Coming* In terms of audience response, this was the more favorably received of the two programs. As should be expected with targeted programs, the intended audience (black teens and adults) reacted more enthusiastically than did the general audience viewers. While the general audience reaction did include rather substantive problems with script, characters and stereotyping, the general audience is sympathetic with goals of the program and feels the script had a universal appeal (regardless of the black cast and targeted nature of the series). The general audience viewers said they would not view the current treatment (i.e., the Game Plan episode), but felt that the series might be improved considerably.

All viewers, black and general audience, complained of stereotyping. High Rise's jiving and hand slapping, combined with Kevin's fun-loving and unambitious approach to school and career presented too frivolous and undesirable an image of the young black male. While the female figures, Joanne and Kevin's mother, were well liked for their ambition and seriousness, the audience felt that the program should offer a serious young black male character. They also complained that the father should have played a strong role in this episode, and that the missing black father was not compatible with the series' objective of presenting a cohesive nuclear black family.

Black viewers, while dissatisfied with these stereotypical elements of the episode, noted that the program was an improvement over the images of blacks presented on most commercial television, and they hoped that programs like *Up and Coming* could be saved and improved in order to present positive portrayals of black family life--portrayals which they said were badly needed and generally unavailable on television.

All viewers, black and general audience, would have liked a more involving, faster paced script and deeper characterizations. Blacks were more tolerant of the program's limitations in these respects, not wanting to discourage the production of programs like *Up and Coming* which strive to improve past and current imbalances in televised portrayals of black life.

4. Conclusions about *Winslow House* This program was not as well received as *Up and Coming*. Viewer criticism was more severe and less optimistic that the program could be salvaged. Once again, and as should be expected with targeted programs, the program's appeal was stronger in the target group. However, the general audience appeared far less receptive to the program and their criticism less likely to lead them to sample it, even given certain production improvements. Furthermore, within the target group (viewers 55 years of age and older), there was a split between the younger segment (55 - 65 years of age) and the older viewers (65 years of age and older), with the younger segment very critical about the irrelevance of the program to their own daily lives and about the image it presented of aging in contemporary society.

While older viewers especially, and younger viewers somewhat, supported the program's objectives, this particular program was seen as missing its mark. Viewers agreed that television is badly in need of programs which realistically portray the opportunities and problems inherent in aging, but this program offended many with its stereotypes and its failure to portray any desirable role models of older people actively involved in and exerting control over their own lives.

Most viewers in all three studies found serious stereotyping problems, especially in Emma and Mike. Emma's excessive ethnicity and Mike's premature "old man behavior"

and his negative attitudes toward the young were frequently cited as undesirable stereotypes. Most viewers also complained about the multiple plots and cliffhanger ending. They would have preferred a simpler plot that followed one or two storylines and involved only a few characters.

One last and important point is the extent to which these pilot tests uncovered some of the serious challenges in programming to and about older people. Aging is a little discussed, "raw nerve" subject matter in our youth-cult society. While this program appeared somewhat satisfying to the oldest viewers (65 plus), and while other PTV programs targeted to that group (e.g., *Over Easy*) have also managed to satisfy older people, the objective of reaching younger viewers with non-threatening and consciousness-raising images about aging in this society remains a socially important and creatively difficult programming objective.

B. Methodological Advantages and Disadvantages of Each Pilot Testing Method

Although the testing of two pilot programs with the research designs employed in each instance cannot reveal the total capabilities of each research method, the exercise did provide sufficient experience with which to judge the relative capabilities and limitations of each pilot-testing approach. The following criteria OCR brought to its examination of these three methods will next be explored in greater detail, based on the experiences of testing *Winslow House* and *Up and Coming*.

- *Which system offers the viewer sample the highest degree of articulateness, without sacrificing amount of viewer feedback to serious response bias?*

Clearly, of the three methods, open group discussion offers the greatest opportunity for viewers to express whatever evaluation criteria they have brought to their viewing of a pilot. The PEAC System, with its complementary use of closed PEAC responses and follow-up group discussion, takes an intermediate position along this continuum of standardization, and the Percy System, with its restriction of viewer reactions to 18 predefined evaluation labels, is the most restrictive of viewer feedback channels.

However, the narrowing of viewer response is both an advantage and disadvantage. Specification of viewer response criteria (e.g., in the form of response labels as used in PEAC and VOXBOX) facilitates the quantification of viewer consensus. In this sense, it is more likely to bring the research and production staffs identifiable aspects of viewer response which may be used to improve program appeal and effectiveness. Specification of response criteria becomes a disadvantage, however, in eliminating the possible emergence of viewer reactions not anticipated in the original research design or even in the conceptual development of the program. Accordingly, we eliminate the possibility of pleasant and unpleasant surprises as viewers interface with programs in an unanticipated manner.

In the three systems studied, the more open viewer feedback channels, those with a wider capacity to carry unanticipated viewer reactions, rely on public expression in group discussion. Accordingly, the openness and flexibility we enjoy in traditional focus groups and in the follow-up discussions of PEAC responses may well be degraded by the powerful biases that can affect group interactions (e.g., dominance of group opinion by more expressive and assertive group members).

The strong deviations of privately recorded Percy panel responses and supplementary KCTS phone interviews underscore the possibility that a contagion of opinion in PEAC and focus group discussions may have created an artifactual group response to the pilots unrepresentative of actual family-centered or solitary conditions we know to be the true living room experience of television viewing. In this respect, it is particularly interesting to note that both the PEAC results on *Winslow House* and the focus group results on *Up and Coming* demonstrated an opinion formation process in which early individual responses (paper and pencil measures in the focus groups and PEAC responses in that study) were steadily overtaken by developments in group discussion.

In terms of this first criterion for evaluating pilot testing methods, we must acknowledge the respective advantages of both private and standardized viewer response (as provided by PEAC, VOXBOX, and individual phone interviews) and of less structured and more developmental measures of program evaluation processes. Complementary use of both types of viewer feedback channels, with careful attention to the limitations inherent in each, appears the best solution.

■ *Which system has the potential to facilitate the development and future application of standardized pilot testing evaluation criteria, to build meaningful norms for various program types in terms of important production and policy considerations?*

One promising opportunity in pilot testing research is the long-term development of knowledge about the nature of audience program preferences and the evaluative criteria most important in those judgments. Testing a variety of new television programs over time holds promise for analyzing important program production variables and aspects of viewer response most closely associated with successful programs of a given type, format, target audience or subject matter. Both pilots treated in these six studies, for example, could contribute to longer-term understanding of the viewing sensibilities and interests of two minority audiences--blacks and older persons.

Furthermore, given the specification of key programming priorities for public television, with respect to both general and target audiences, pilot testing over a number of programs could be used to develop normative standards for important programming objectives (e.g., provision of an alternative service or of educational/informative material, increasing the diversity of current fare). Given normative standards along such purposive dimensions, new pilots could be assessed in terms of their potential for furthering institutional programming objectives.

Theoretically, each of the three systems could build a data base of audience response which could provide a meaningful context for the evaluation of individual pilots in terms of key variables related to audience response, production variables and programming objectives.

Moderator guides for focus groups are as "programmable" as PEAC's changeable response labels and could be used to monitor, over time and over pilots tested, standard evaluation criteria which could then be interpreted in light of past program production success and failure. Here again, the more readily quantifiable nature of structured testing methods would greatly facilitate the compilation and trending of such a data base. Ac-

cordingly, a system like PEAC emerges as highly appropriate to such pilot testing purposes. Like PEAC, the Percy System offers opportunities for the identification of audience response dimensions most meaningful in evaluating various program types and formats. Although PEAC baselines have already been calculated for several important audience response variables (e.g., level of viewer involvement), no such historical analysis of evaluation criteria is yet available from the Percy System.

- *Which, in addition to facilitating the development and application of standardized program norms, is still flexible enough to address the research to the special programming objectives of individual pilot programs?*

Along this criterion, the Percy System, with its fixed viewer response labels and permanent panel memberships, becomes a difficult research tool in the face of special programs with goals and intended audiences which do not coincide with the permanent features of the system. In both *Winslow House* and *Up and Coming*, for example, the Percy System was the only method unable to specially sample the intended audience and a specified proportion of general audience viewers, in order to explicitly predict the responses of the very people for whom the programs were intended. Even if the panelists had included a sufficient number of older viewers and black viewers, the current data analysis and reporting procedures used by the Percy System do not even afford the researcher the opportunity to break out key demographic variables that characterize either individual or household responses to programs. If and when such data analyses are provided by the system, the utility of the resulting data for understanding individual viewer differences in response to tested programs will be significantly improved.

- *Which system has the greatest ability to provide meaningful diagnostic feedback to the pilot program's producers; that is, to present audience reactions with clear and direct implications for program production, promotion, and scheduling decisions?*

Along this criterion, one must basically acknowledge that it is not the specific research tool employed, but rather how the researcher applies those tools to programming decisions which ultimately affords any of the three systems their diagnostic utility.

Focus group discussion guides and PEAC labels can be directed to collect a broad range of data; the relevance of those data to the producer is basically a function of cooperative research planning by both the research and production staff. Researchers adept as intermediaries between viewer-critics and producers must serve a vital translation and transmission function, collecting and expressing audience reactions in a manner that speaks as directly as possible to the producer's creative and technical decisions. For the two programs studied, the producer's programming objectives and expressed concerns about particular aspects of the programs treatments (e.g., possibly offensive portrayals) were developed to guide the moderated focus group discussions and the PEAC labeling (especially the monitoring of stereotypical incidents).

Given the fixed labeling of Percy System response buttons, such adaptive procedures were not possible. However, the Percy System's moment-by-moment reporting of viewer response, time-locked to program content and critical script events, proved superior to the PEAC System in its provision of more diversified (i.e., 18 response labels) time-locked commentary. PEAC researchers are generally reluctant to ask viewers to monitor more than two or three potential responses, contending that the task is sufficiently foreign and complex. In the Percy System, it is perhaps the feature of a permanent household panel who use the VOXBOX on a daily viewing basis that permits their monitoring of up to 18 judgmental tasks.

Finally, it should be noted that the PEAC System has one particularly useful capability which is impossible for the Percy System but could be adapted in a paper-and-pencil mode for traditional focus groups. One of its adaptable features is the ability to halt a group's viewing of a given pilot at a critical moment in the program, insert on the viewing screen a multiple choice measure of viewing comprehension (or of other dependent variables of interest) and have viewers respond to the question on their PEAC devices before normal viewing of the pilot is resumed. Because the Percy System relies on the cooperative KCTS broadcast of pilots, such obtrusive measures are generally infeasible.

- *Which method has the potential of addressing not just the particular pilot being tested, but also the program concept, content area or target group, so that audience reactions to a specific pilot might also be used to identify and evaluate broader programming directions beyond the one program tested?*

In the testing of both programs, both focus group discussions and PEAC follow-up discussions explored the value of the program concept, independent of the particular pilot tested. Discussions ranged over the problems with commercial television treatments of the same subject matter (aging, black family life), the importance of providing improved television treatments of these subjects, and the feature of programming most appealing to the target group in question. Both systems sought to acquire such larger formative guidance, from both target audience members and the general audience.

With its restricted and highly standardized viewer feedback channel, the Percy System could not, of course, go beyond the evaluation of individual programs to generate meaningful information about productive and responsive programming trends for the future. The fact that KCTS phone interview data suggested audience members for *Up and Coming* were not aware of the black-oriented objectives of the program suggests either that the program was extremely successful in "mainstreaming" its objectives regarding black portrayals, or that the context of a group discussion is essential to any meaningful viewer evaluation of program concepts or programming objectives.

- *Which method proves most cost effective in conventional research terms of sampling flexibility and turnaround time?*

As we have already seen in the evaluation of the three pilot testing methods along preceding criteria, the Percy System sample is completely inflexible, while viewers studied

with PEAC or focus group methods can be adjourned in any geographic setting, in any sample composition subject to effective recruitment. The only sampling advantage the Percy System has over the other two methods is a contextual one, that is, its ability to collect viewer data in the naturalistic home-viewing environment. Furthermore, as the system expands to additional markets across the country, and as data analytic capabilities are extended to permit demographic breakdowns or special subsample recruitments of panelists, the system can develop an ability to test the responses of different kinds of viewers.

With regard to turnaround time, all three systems are capable of generating final reports within approximately the same time frame—two to three weeks after testing. However, both PEAC and VOXBOX provide interim hard copy readouts of viewer response (graphically superimposed over the program's timeline) on an overnight basis. Additionally, VOXBOX can display audience response on-line during the actual test sessions.